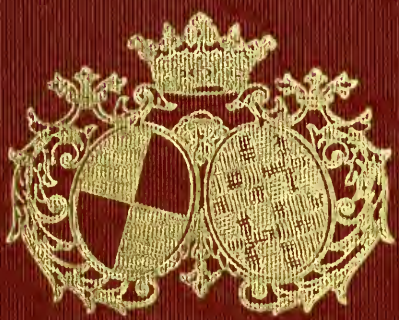


THE

LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

Carnavalet Edition

NEWLY RE-EDITED, REVISED AND CORRECTED,
INCLUDING OVER THREE HUNDRED
LETTERS NOT PREVIOUSLY
TRANSLATED INTO
ENGLISH

IN SEVEN VOLUMES

VOLUME II

The Carnavalet Edition of

The Letters

of

Madame de Sévigné

is in seven volumes, and is limited to fifteen hundred and fifty numbered sets. The number of each set is in the first volume.



ROGER DE RABUTIN,

COMTE DE BUSSY.

Peint par Le Febvre *Gravé par C. L. Masquelier*

THE

LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ



WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

A. EDWARD NEWTON

PHILADELPHIA

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1927

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THE LETTERS OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

LETTER 169

From Madame la Marquise DE SÉVIGNÉ *to her Daughter Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday evening, January 15, 1672.

I wrote to you this morning, my dear daughter, by the courier, who brings you the most pleasing and agreeable tidings about your Provence affairs; but I shall write to you again to-night, that it may not be said that the post came in without letters from me. I do really believe that you love me; you tell me so at least, and what end can you have in deceiving yourself and me too? And if you do not love me, you would be greatly to be pitied in being thus overwhelmed with such a number of my letters: yours constitute the happiness of my life. I shall say nothing to you about the *fine soul*; it was Langlade who made use of the expression, by way of joke; but in earnest, you have a *fine soul*: it is not perhaps one of those first-rate souls, like that of *What's his name*[1], the Roman, who, rather than break his word, returned back to the Carthaginians, though he was well assured they would instantly put him

[1] Monsieur de Sauvebeuf, giving an account one day to the King's brother of a negotiation in which he had been engaged at the Court of Spain, said to him, *What's his name, What's his name,* the King of Spain said to me, etc.

to death; but next to him I think you may challenge a place with the foremost.

We have been to see the new play of Racine's, and thought it admirable. My *daughter-in-law* [1] is in my opinion the best performer I have ever seen: she surpasses Desœillets a hundred thousand times; as for me, though I am thought to have some portion of talent for the stage, I am not fit to snuff the candles when she appears. She is ugly, when you come near her; I do not therefore wonder my son's passion was damped by her presence: but when she speaks verse, she is really adorable. *Bajazet* is altogether a fine performance; the distress rises towards the end, and the passions are very strong, and not of so extravagant a kind as in *Bérénice*; yet I cannot think it superior to his *Andromache.* As for the delightful plays of Corneille, they as much surpass this piece as your idea surpassed Make the application, and remember that instance of folly; but be assured, that nothing will ever equal (I do not say surpass, but equal) the enchanting passages we meet with in Corneille. He read us the other day, at M. de La Rochefoucauld's, a piece of his, which showed what he once had been: I wish you had been with me that afternoon; I am sure you would not have thought your time ill spent: you would have dropped a tear or two, for I myself shed twenty; besides, you would have greatly admired your *sister-in-law*: you would have had a sight of *the Angels* before your eyes, and La Bourdeaux dressed out like a little miss. The Duc was behind the scenes, and Pomenars above with the footmen, wrapped up in his cloak, for fear of the Comte de Créance, who is resolved to have him hanged, whether he will or not. The *beaux* were all upon the stage; the Marquis de Villeroi was in a masquerade costume; the Comte de Guiche braced up like his own spirit; and all the rest looked like

[1] Meaning La Champmêlé, the actress, with whom her son, the Marquis de Sévigné, had been in love. It is said, that she possessed no share of any natural genius, but that Racine, who was likewise in love with her, had taught her to pronounce verse mechanically.

so many banditti. I have met the Comte twice at M. de La Rochefoucauld's, and always thought he had a great deal of wit: he appeared then, indeed, less on the reserve than he usually does. Our Abbé here sends you word, that he has received the plan of Grignan, which he likes extremely, and takes a walk in it now and then by way of anticipation: he wishes he had a side-view of the house; for my part, I shall content myself till I am altogether in possession of it, by being there. I have a thousand compliments for you from everyone who has heard of the obliging manner in which the King spoke of M. de Grignan; Madame de Verneuil was the first who came to me, she has been like to die. Farewell, my child; what shall I say of my love for you, and the interest I feel in all that concerns you? I embrace the *admirable* Grignan, the *prudent* Coadjutor, and the *presumptuous* Adhémar: was it not thus I styled them the other day?

LETTER 170

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, January 20, 1672.

I send you M. de La Rochefoucauld's *Maxims,* revised and corrected, with additions; it is a present to you from himself. Some of them I can make shift to guess the meaning of; but there are others that, to my shame be it spoken, I cannot understand at all. God knows how it will be with you. There is a dispute between the Archbishop of Paris and the Archbishop of Rheims about a point of ceremony: Paris will have Rheims ask leave of him, as his superior, to officiate, which Rheims will not consent to. It is said, that these two right reverends will never agree till they are thirty or forty leagues apart; if that is the case, they are both of them likely to continue as they are. The ceremony it relates to is the canonisation of one Borgia, a Jesuit. The whole opera band is to

exert itself on the occasion; the streets will be illuminated even to the Rue Saint-Antoine; the people are all mad about it: old Mérinville, however, has died without having seen it.

Do not deceive yourself, my child, by entertaining too good an opinion of my letters. The other day an impertinent fellow, seeing the monstrous length of a letter I was writing to you, asked me very seriously, if I thought anybody could possibly read it all: I trembled at the thought of it, but without any intention of amendment; for the correspondence I have with you is my existence, the sole pleasure of my life; and every other consideration is but mean, when put in comparison with it. I am uneasy about your brother: poor fellow! The weather is very cold: he lies in Camp, and is still on the march to Cologne, for the Lord knows how long! I was in hopes of seeing him this winter, and see where he is now! After all, I find little Mademoiselle Adhémar must be the comfort of my old age: I wish you could but see how fond she is of me; how she cries after me, and hangs about me. She is not a beauty, but she is very pleasing, has a delightful voice, and a skin as clear and white..... In short, I dote on her. You, it seems, dote on your boy; I am very glad of it: we cannot have too many things to amuse us; real or imaginary, it does not signify.

To-morrow there is to be a ball at Madame's. I saw a heap of jewels tossing about at Mademoiselle's, which put me in mind of past troubles: and yet would to heaven we were at the same work again! For how can I be unhappy while you are with me? Alas! my whole life is one continued scene of sorrow and disappointment. Dear Monsieur Nicole! have pity on me; and teach me to bear, with patience, the dispensations of Providence. Farewell, my dearest child, I dare not say I adore you; but I cannot conceive any degree of love superior to mine: the kind and pleasing assurances you give me of yours, at once lighten and increase my sorrows.

LETTER 171

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, January 22, 1672, at 10 o'clock at night.

I have but just been able, my child, to leave Mademoiselle Adhémar's bedside to write to you. If you would not be jealous, I know not what I could not say to you of this sweet child: it is the most amiable little creature that ever was seen; she is so lively, so brisk, and has such a number of little engaging ways, that no one can help being quite delighted with her. I have been at MADEMOISELLE's to-day, who sent for me to come to her; MONSIEUR came in while I was there, and immediately began talking of you: he said, there was nobody capable of filling your place at the ball; and very obligingly added, that nevertheless, your absence ought to be no hindrance to my going there: this is just the thing I wanted. There was a good deal of talk about the war; it seems a determined thing. We are in expectation of the Queen of Spain's [1] answer; but let her say what she will, it is resolved, I find, that we must come to blows: if she declares for us, we fall upon the Dutch; if she takes the other side, then we shall seize on Flanders; and when once the uproar is begun, it will not be easily quieted. All this while our troops are upon their march towards Cologne. They say M. de Luxembourg is to open the scene. There are some commotions in Germany.

I have had a good deal of conversation with M. d'Usèz: our Abbé mentioned to him in a very pretty way, what he intended for the Abbé de Grignan; this affair, however, must be kept secret; it all depends on M. d'Usèz, for it is through him only that we can obtain the proper

[1] Anne-Marie d'Autriche, the widow of Philippe IV. of Spain, and mother of Charles II. who was not declared of age till the year 1672: his dominions being, in the meanwhile, governed by the Queen-mother, assisted by six Counsellors of the deceased King's nomination.

requisites from His Majesty. I was told at my first coming in, that the Chevalier de Grignan [1] has the small-pox at M. d'Usèz's house: this will be an unlucky accident for him, a great vexation to all who are his friends, and the occasion of infinite trouble to M. d'Usèz, as it will entirely hinder him from acting in the present emergency. This is all of a piece with my usual ill fortune. You are continually praising me for my letters, and yet I dare not commend yours, lest it should look like giving praise for praise; however, I must not lay myself so far under restraint as to conceal the truth. Your thoughts and periods are many of them incomparable of their kind, and your style is altogether as perfect as one could wish; d'Hacqueville and I were quite charmed at some brilliant passages we observed in them: nor are you less excellent in your narrations; the passage relating to the King, your resentment against Lauzun and the Bishop, are each of them masterpieces in their way: sometimes I show a few of them to Madame de Villars; but she generally fixes on the most tender parts, which presently bring tears into her eyes. Do not be afraid of my showing your letters improperly; I know who are worthy of that confidence, and what may be told and what concealed. Listen, my dear, to an act of goodness and benevolence of your Royal Master's; it will serve to redouble your zeal for his service. I am told from very good authority, that the other day M. de Montausier [2] applied to the King for a small Abbey for one of his friends, which was refused him; upon which he flung out of the presence in great discontent, and was heard to say, as he went out, *none but Ministers and Mistresses had any interest in this country.* These words were not quite proper; they were presently carried to the King's ears, who sent for M. de Montausier, and gently reprimanded him for his heat, putting him in mind of the little

[1] Charles-Philippe Adhémar de Monteil, Chevalier or Knight of Malta, grand-nephew of Jacques Adhémar de Monteil, Bishop of Usèz.

[2] Charles de Sainte-Maure, Duc de Montausier, Governor to Louis Dauphin of France, and only son of Louis XIV.

reason he had to complain; and the next day appointed Madame de Crussol [1], *dame du palais*. Let me tell you, this is the conduct of a Titus. You may judge whether the Governor was not greatly confounded, as well as the Bishop, who is indebted to you for his deputation: these are the most cruel methods of revenge. The King has reconciled the two Archbishops of Paris and Rheims. What shall I tell you next? My poor aunt is afflicted with severe pain; this gives me great concern, and lays me under the indispensable necessity of attending her.

*LETTER 172

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, January 24, 1672.

It is very odd, my dear cousin, that the desire of writing to you should seize me all at once, in the chamber of our little sister of Sainte-Marie. It would seem as if our friendship were founded upon the sanctity of our grandmother. What else can I think, when I find that so many places where I have seen you, bring you less to my mind than this, where I never beheld you in my life. You have a daughter here who contributes to the miracle. She is no more of a fool than if she saw you every day, and is as wise as if she had never been out of the walls of Sainte-Marie. She is a rigid Christian, but she has certain charms of the Rabutins that render her perfectly fascinating. I doubt whether any one of your children surpasses this: but I shall make you vain. I was for eight months in Brittany, during which I never felt as if I had wit enough to write to you. It was my intention to renew the correspondence on my return, and I begin here. The better day, the better deed. I shall tell you no news, and shall

[1] Marie-Julie de Sainte-Maure, wife of Emmanuel de Crussol, Duc d'Usèz, and daughter of M. de Montausier.

* Letters with an asterisk have not previously been translated.

say nothing of what is expected. You know everything that passes; at least, I am willing to believe so; for I do not think it is quite safe to write to you upon certain subjects. There are some new comedies being produced, of which I have the vanity to think your opinion will be the same as mine. Adieu, my dear cousin; you cannot imagine how much I merit the honour of your friendship.

*LETTER 173

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, January 28, 1672.

Would you know, Madame, what influenced you to write to me from Sainte-Marie, where you never saw me, rather than from a thousand places where you have seen me a thousand times? I will tell you. It was my daughter who brought me to your remembrance; and being soon weary of the subjects that are discussed in a convent, you employed a part of the time of your visit to write to her father; from which I infer, that you had rather hold communion with the world than with me, but that you had rather hold communion with me than with God. If you are not a hypocrite you will acknowledge this. When I came to that part of your letter, where you say, that my daughter is no more of a fool than if she saw me every day, and that she is as wise as if she had never left the walls of Sainte-Marie, I interpreted it, as wise as if she had never seen me. In reality, my society might contribute to render a young person agreeable, but it would not easily convert her into a nun. My daughter is a very good one, I am told by many persons besides yourself; and the testimony you bear to the charms of her mind, is what I call passing the ordeal. Her sisters have also their share of merit; and if my misfortune has been the means of depriving them of the advantages of affluence, it has been made up to them by habits of temperance and

a good education. You ought to have written to me from Brittany: we have both lost by it. You laugh at me in saying you had not wit enough. Are you obliged then to study to write good letters to me? They would lose, I think, that character, if they were so written.

LETTER 174

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, January 27, 1672.

Never did I see anything more charming than your letters; you declare yourself fully satisfied with the love and esteem I bear you, and express yourself in a manner that must fill a heart like mine with the warmest tenderness. You seem well acquainted with all that passes in it, and rightly perceive that most of my actions have for their object the being, in some measure, serviceable to you: you have put the true signification on my journey to Pomponne, as well as on the visits I made to M. Le Camus: trust me, my dearest daughter, you are not at all mistaken; and while your sagacity and penetration do me such good offices with your heart, I have no reason to apprehend a diminution in your affection for me. I cannot but admire the sweetness of your temper; it is even beyond what my most sanguine hopes could have formed: if at any time it should appear to be otherwise, it should be forgiven for the sake of what it really is; and for the same reason should we forgive those to whom you do not show yourself sufficiently for them to find out all the good qualities you are possessed of, and who, not being used to you or to them, are apt to take you only by your words. But, my dear child, I am quite concerned at your being so extremely indolent, as not even to entertain a thought of moving from where you are; indeed it vexes me: I think M. de Grignan much more reasonable in the thoughts he had about Maréchal de Bellefonds' post, if he had resigned:

what he proposed in that case was quite to my mind; but you saw how that affair turned out. I could wish that you would not lay aside all desire of coming nearer to us, if occasion should offer; for M. d'Usèz might, with a very good face, represent to His Majesty, how impossible it is not to be uneasy at being obliged to serve him at such a distance from his person, after having spent the greatest part of his life about him, as M. de Grignan has done.

M. de Berni, the other day at Versailles, mistook a window for a door, and fell from the first floor upon a little boy, who was very much hurt, and prevented his being killed. Timely assistance was given; and though his head was broken, it is thought he will do well. This comes from having windows to the floor: they should always have a wire-guard before them. This accident has made a great noise at Versailles.

I desire, my dear, that you will frequently mention my aunt in your letters; it will be some comfort to her in her tortures. I have sent your letters as directed; that to Madame de La Fayette is extremely pretty. There was something very strange in the beginning of your last; you bid me guess what you had done the night before. I trembled from head to foot, and gave all over for lost; at last it proved to be, that you had sat up waiting for the courier who was to bring your letters, and had very joyously been drinking your Royal Master's health: this gave me breath again, and I applaud you for your zeal; for, in truth, it is impossible to praise the King too much: he is, if possible, grown more perfect within this last year. The Court poets have already begun at Court; for my part, I like prose as well, since everyone can use it, to speak and sing his praise.

I have been writing a long letter to M. de Pomponne, relative to affairs in Provence, as M. d'Usèz cannot see him to talk with him, on account of the poor Chevalier's having the small-pox: I dare not tell you in what a condition he is: his youth gives us some hope; but I have had many uneasy moments on his account. The Comtesse de

Fiesque's daughter, Madame de Guerchi, died lately in the country of a fright she got by a fire: she was eight months gone; she miscarried, and died shortly after. It shocks one to hear of such accidents. The young Duc de Rohan is at the point of death, of a violent fever he got with swallowing two glasses of brandy, after drinking too freely of wine. It is the seventh day of his illness, and he is now judged to be past hope of recovery. A fine prospect this for M. and Madame de Soubise: for my part, after what I saw of him at our Assembly, and the manner in which I knew he treated Madame de Rohan, I am quite easy about the matter. The Chancellor (*Séguier*) is dying: he has sent the seals to the King by the Duc de Coislin: a fine present indeed! Good God! my dear, how do I wish for M. de Grignan to have some handsome place here about His Master's person, and let your Provençals go whistle! Adhémar will make me hate them all heartily: it would be well to let them know what he thinks of them. Adieu, my dearest child, I think of nothing but coming to see you. I embrace my dear Grignan and his dearer wife.

LETTER 175

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

From the Convent of Sainte-Marie-in-the-Faubourg, Friday, January 29, 1672, being the day of Saint François-de-Sales, and that on which you were married: this is my first rhapsody; for I make a *bout-de-l'an*[1] of everything.

Here I am, my dear child, in the very place, where, of all places in the world, I wept the most violently and bitterly, on the cruel day on which you were separated from me: I tremble still, whenever I think of it. I have been

[1] *Bout-de-l'an,* a service in the Romish church that is read for a deceased person at the year's end after his death. By this Madame de Sévigné means to say, that she is always recollecting some subject of grief or concern.

walking a full hour in the garden, while the sisters are at vespers, stunned with the most horrid music, from which I thought it wise to escape. My dear child, I can no longer support this: my remembrance of you destroys me on every occasion: I thought I should have died in this garden, where I have so often seen you: I will not tell you the condition I am in: your rigid virtue is a stranger to the weakness of the human heart. There are certain days, hours, and moments, in which I am no longer mistress of myself: I know my weakness, and do not pretend to a fortitude of which I am not possessed. Thus it is with me; I am quite exhausted with grief; and, to complete my misery, a man whom I had sent to the Chevalier de Grignan, is just returned, with intelligence that in no degree helps to dry my tears. I imagine he has bequeathed in your favour whatever he had to give. Keep it, I desire you, however trifling it may be, as a mark of the esteem he had for you; and do not dispose of it as I know your generous nature would lead you to do; for there is not one of your brothers-in-law, who is not richer in proportion than you are. I cannot express to you the concern this loss has given me. What! shall such a little viper as M. de Rohan be snatched from the jaws of death, and this amiable youth, whose birth, person, temper, and honest heart, can make his loss desirable or serviceable to no one, be thus lost to us! Had I been free to follow my own inclinations, I would never have left him: his disorder would have given me no apprehensions on my own account: but I cannot act in this respect as I would. You will have letters by the post, written subsequent to this, which will give you a more circumstantial account of his ailment: it is enough for me to feel it as I do.

It is reported that the Chancellor is dead. I cannot tell whether the seals will be disposed of before the post goes out. The Comtesse (*de Fiesque*) is in great affliction for the loss of her daughter: she is at Sainte-Marie de Saint-Denis. My dear child, women cannot take too much care of themselves, both during pregnancy and ly-

ing-in, nor guard too much against being in either of those situations: I mention no names. Adieu, my dearest; this will be a short letter: I cannot write in my present frame of mind, and you have no need of my dullness; but, when it so happens that you receive a letter of an unreasonable length, thank yourself for it, and the manner in which you flatter me on the pleasure my long letters give you: you cannot now complain of them. I embrace you a thousand and a thousand times; and so return to my garden, and then to church for a little while, and then to visit the sick, who are as full of sorrow and vexation as myself.

Here is sister Madeleine-Agnès coming in, who salutes you in the name of the Lord.

LETTER 176

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, February 3, 1672.

I had a whole hour's conversation yesterday, with M. de Pomponne. It would take more paper than I have by me, to tell you the joy we had in seeing each other again, and how many subjects we passed over for want of time to discuss them in. In short, I found him the same as ever; he is all perfection, and sets a much greater value on me than I deserve: his father has given him to understand, that he cannot more sensibly oblige *him*, than by doing everything in his power to oblige *me*; though he says there are a thousand other reasons which would have induced him to do it, especially the consideration of my having the whole government of Provence on my hands: this is an admirable pretext for our having frequent business together. This was the only subject that had its full scope. I had an opportunity of talking to him at large about the Bishop: he knows very well how to give

attention to others, as well as to speak himself: he very readily gave credit to the description I drew of that prelate's manners, and did not seem very well pleased, that a man of his profession should take upon himself the Governorship. I think I suffered nothing to escape that was proper to be said on the occasion. He always inspires me with wit: his own is so perfectly easy and unconstrained, that we are insensibly led to repose an entire confidence in him, and to speak our mind in the most happy terms. How many do I know who are quite the reverse of this! In short, my dear child, without fishing for any more compliments, of which you are so very prodigal, I quitted him, full of joy at the thoughts of the service this connection may be to you in the future. We agreed to write to each other. He seems fond of my unstudied and simple style, though his own is that of eloquence itself.

I sent you melancholy news of the poor Chevalier in my last; I have just received more of the same kind: he is alive still, but has received extreme unction, and continues as ill as possible: the pustules dry up as soon as they appear. It is, in my opinion, the same sort as Madame de Saint-Simon's. Rippert will tell you more of it than I can: I hear from him every day, and am in great uneasiness about him, for I find I love him more than I thought I did. The Princess de Conti [1] was seized this evening with a fit of apoplexy: she is not dead yet; but remains insensible and speechless: they are torturing her in a thousand ways to bring her to herself: there are a hundred persons in her room, and three hundred in the house: there is weeping, and wailing, and great outcry: that is all I know of the matter at present. As for the Chancellor [2], he is certainly dead, and made a truly noble exit; his bright understanding, his prodigious memory, his natural eloquence, and eminent piety, retained their full lustre to the very moment of his dissolution. The simile of the

[1] Anne-Marie Martinozzi, Princess de Conti, died 4th of February, 1672.

[2] Pierre Séguier, who died the 28th of January, 1672.

torch, that shines brightest when nearest being extinguished, is verified in him. Le Mascaron [1] was with him in his last moments, and was astonished at the answers he made, and the number of quotations he drew from the holy Scriptures; he paraphrased the *Miserere,* and drew tears from the eyes of all the by-standers: he quoted passages from the Scriptures, and the writings of the Fathers, with greater readiness than any of the Bishops could have done who attended him. In short, his death was one of the most glorious and extraordinary things imaginable; and what makes it still more so, is his leaving but very little wealth behind him; he was as rich the day he entered into employment, as that on which he died: it is true, he provided for his family; but that was not providing for himself: in short, he has left no more than seventy thousand livres a year; and what is that for a man who had been forty years Chancellor, and had besides a handsome fortune of his own? Death shows up many things. I did not learn what I tell you from any of his own family. They are much visited. Madame de Coulanges and I held our ranks there. Madame de Verneuil [2] is so ill, that she sees nobody. It is not yet known who will have the seals.

I desire you will put the Coadjutor in mind of answering M. d'Agen [3] on the affair he wrote to him about: I am plagued to death upon the subject. It is very wrong to be regardless of a Bishop of such repute. I always put off writing to this same Coadjutor from day to day: I think I am infected with his irregularities: I find fault with him, and, at the same time, sin myself. I embrace M. de Grignan: does he still talk of thrushes? There was a lady the other day, who, instead of making use of the old saying, *As full as a thrush,* said Madame la Presidente was *As deaf as a thrush*: it made us all laugh. Farewell,

[1] Jules Mascaron of the Oratory, a very celebrated preacher; he was afterwards made Bishop of Tulle, and from thence transferred, in 1679, to the Bishopric of Agen.

[2] Madame de Verneuil was daughter of the Chancellor Séguier.

[3] Claude Joli, Bishop of Agen: he had been curate of St. Nicolas-des-Champs at Paris.

my dearest child, your little girl is a sweet creature: she amuses me greatly, and grows handsomer and handsomer every day.

LETTER 177

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, February 5, 1672.
This day thousand years I was born. [1]

I was told this morning, that the Chevalier was certainly better: I have great hopes from his youth: pray heaven restore him to our wishes. As to the Princess de Conti, she died about seven or eight hours after I had made up my packet; that is, yesterday about four o'clock in the morning, without recovering her senses for an instant, or uttering a single intelligible word. She now and then called for Cécile, one of her women, and ejaculated, "My God!" They were in hopes her senses were returning, but she said no more; and expired with a shriek, and with such violent convulsions, that she left the marks of her fingers on the arms of the woman who held her. No words can describe the desolation and horror that prevailed in her apartment. The Duc, the Princes de Conti, Madame de Longueville, Madame de Gamache, all wept as if their hearts would break. Madame de Gesvres had recourse to fainting, and Madame de Brissac roared as loud as she could, and threw herself upon the floor. In short, the attendants were obliged to send them out of the room, for they did not know what they did; they rather over-acted their parts: somebody says, those who strive to prove too much, prove nothing. However, there was a general grief. The King seemed a good deal affected, and made her panegyric, by saying, that she was more considerable for her virtue, than the greatness of her birth and station. By her will, she has left the education of her

[1] Madame de Sévigné at this time was forty-six years of age!

children to Madame de Longueville. The Prince is appointed their guardian. She has left twenty thousand crowns to the poor, and as much among her servants: she has ordered her body to be interred in her own parish, and without the least pomp, like any other common person. I do not know whether all these little matters come *apropos* or not: but you will have me write long letters, and so you must bear with them, and take it for your pains. I saw this pious Princesse yesterday after she was laid out: she was greatly disfigured by the rough treatment she had received: her mouth was strangely mangled, two of her teeth were broken; and they had burnt her on the head: so that, in short, if people recover from a fit of the apoplexy, they must be miserable spectacles all the rest of their lives. Her death affords subject for a number of excellent reflections: it would have been a dreadful one to any other than herself; but to her it was the most happy that could be desired, since she felt nothing from it, and she was besides always prepared. It has even affected Brancas.

I forgot to mention to you in my letter of the day before yesterday, that I met Canaples at Notre-Dame, who, after a thousand compliments and good wishes for M. de Grignan and you, told me, that Maréchal de Villeroi had assured him, that M. de Grignan's letters had been greatly admired in the Council; that they had been read with pleasure, and that the King said, he never saw anything better written. I promised him to let you know this. The lady, whose name I did not mention to you in my last, was Madame de Louvois. *Apropos,* M. de Louvois took his seat at the Council-table four days ago, as one of the King's Ministers. His Majesty is to sign to-morrow in the presence of six Counsellors of State, and our Masters of the Requests. No one knows how long this will last. This is a fine employment for His Majesty, and he will, I dare say, acquit himself very well in it. I have had a thousand extravagant thoughts in my head about the Chancellor: I cannot think where I got them, in the con-

dition I have been in for these two or three days past. The evening, the whole day, and the day following your departure from here last year, have run so strongly in my head, and so affected my mind and spirits, that I cannot keep the tears from my eyes; and yet nothing can be more silly than to grieve for a thing that it is out of our power to remedy: it is destroying ourselves to no purpose, and is just as ridiculous as forming wishes, and building castles in the air. You have too much good sense to waste your time on such trifles; but they please me. I am charmed, my dearest child, to find you take such pleasure in my letters, though I cannot think them so entertaining as you say they are. I have sent you four reams of paper, you know on what conditions: I hope to have the greatest part of it back again between this and Easter: after that, I shall aspire to more substantial joys.

LETTER 178

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, February 10, 1672.

At length, my dear child, after a multitude of false alarms and vain hopes, we have lost the poor Chevalier. I must confess to you, that I have been greatly affected at the death of this excellent young man; it took place on Saturday the sixth of February at four o'clock in the morning. If a truly Christian end can administer comfort to Christians, we have the greatest reason for consolation in the assurance of his being happy. Never did anyone show more resignation, piety, or grace: he would not have accepted life, had it been in the power of anyone to have insured it him. So great was his confidence in the mercies of his God, that there is the greatest reason to believe, that he felt such a disposition of soul, as he would not willingly have hazarded on any account. He lost a great deal of blood: and was very much against being

bled the last time, which was the eleventh; but the physicians overruled him; and he told them, that, since it must be so, he submitted, but saw they were resolved to kill him in form. The death of M. de Guise, which was supposed to have happened from not being bled, has occasioned the loss of many lives since. The poor youth was ill ever since his journey to Saint-Germain: he was seized with a violent vomiting and laxativeness at his first going into waiting, and took something to stop it, which had the desired effect; but, in about a week after, as he was returning to Paris, he was seized with a fever and the small-pox, which covered him so completely, and was so offensive, that those who attended him could scarcely stay in the chamber. Thus did Providence see fit to cut short his life in the very flower of his youth. This is a melancholy detail; but when we are truly affected, we do not strive to conceal it by pretended ignorance. I ought not to introduce any other subject in this letter. However, when you have dried your tears a little, you may read what follows, and you will learn what resolution we have taken with regard to your affairs.

We did not receive the letter you sent us by the courier till yesterday: it was this I was so much distressed about; but now there are none lost. I was near an hour with the Bishop of Usèz. The Abbé was with me. We had a good deal of conversation together; and I am more than ever satisfied with the prudence and good sense of this prelate: you have nothing to do but send him the first thoughts that come into your head, and an hour or two's reflection will be sufficient for him to see all that is proper to be done or left undone. I showed him the letter I had received from M. de Pomponne: I must manage so as to bring about a conversation between M. d'Usèz and him. The very name of poor M. d'Usèz is pestilential [1] at present: he dares not appear at Court, nor can he get to speak with M. Colbert: this ruins us. It is his opinion, that we should not be too hasty in the affair you wrote to him

[1] On account of the small-pox having been in his house.

about; because, if it really belongs to the Deputies, we should not give them all the right of the question, and keep the wrong to ourselves; for, as they do not want for cunning, they will be sure to make the most of every favourable circumstance, and take care to conceal the rest. When people who are in the wrong happen to have some little matter of fact on their side, they turn and wind it a thousand ways, till they become perfectly insupportable. And it is in this you will find the good Bishop's prudence of the greatest service to you.

The Marquis de Villeroi [1] has received orders to retire from Court, on account of his bad behaviour. This is all the King said about it. The affair is variously talked of, and several people are blamed for it. One thing certain is, that Vardes [2] will not be much displeased at it. Lyons is the place of his exile, which will not be very disagreeable to him, provided it does not continue too long. I am so well convinced of the concern you have for the poor Chevalier, that I shall reserve for some other time a thousand little trifles, which would be quite out of season at present.

Your maxim is a divine one: M. de La Rochefoucauld is jealous, and cannot but think he made it himself. The words are very happily arranged; but how comes it that you did not understand his? Alas! is there any living without folly, that is to say, without whims? and is not that man completely foolish, who thinks to show his wisdom by debarring himself of all amusement and diversion? You will be of our opinion, if you reflect.

The Abbé has paid the last duties to the poor Chevalier: I should have discharged mine; but they would have stoned me if I had gone near the house; and so I contented myself with going to weep with M. d'Usèz, who is in another house. I am made very uneasy by hearing of your being at Aix, on account of the small-pox having

[1] The last Maréchal of that name.

[2] It was the Marquis de Villeroi who occasioned the rupture between the Comtesse de Soissons and M. de Vardes.

been there so lately. Heavens, what a sad thing it is to love so well! I can perceive even from here, the tranquil, and peaceable state your poor dear heart was in at Lambesc, where you indulged yourself on the bread and water of indolence: but now you have got back to your *ragoûts* again. There is nothing ridiculous in your comparison; it would make me laugh, indeed, if I was in a humour for laughing; but that is not the case at all times. Alas! my dear child, it is now above a year since I saw you: how deeply do I feel this long absence! and you, my dearest love! do you not feel it a little now and then?

Monsieur DE COULANGES *writes to Madame* DE GRIGNAN *in her Mother's Letter.*

I shall not waste my time and yours, charming Comtesse, in ill-timed compliments; but content myself with assuring you, that no one can be more sincerely afflicted at the death of our poor Chevalier than myself: I was so happy in his acquaintance while in Provence, and promised myself so much satisfaction in the continuance of it here and elsewhere, that his loss has affected me painfully. What a subject of meditation is here for young people, as well as for those of a more advanced age! There is no trusting to either youth or health; we are all alike mortal, but the day and hour no man knoweth. I shall conclude with this commonplace piece of morality, and at the same time request you, my charming Comtesse, to permit me to embrace you with the most sincere and tender respect.

Madame DE COULANGES *writes to Madame* DE GRIGNAN *in her Mother's Letter.*

I am greatly afflicted by the death of the Chevalier de Grignan; but not to add to the trouble you are already in, by that of reading a miserable letter, I shall content my-

self, dear Madame, with desiring you to be assured, that no one can be more interested in any event that is interesting to yourself; and that I derive the greatest pleasure from the hope of seeing you this summer: I am determined to go to Grignan, though I should be obliged to leave the Marquis de Villeroi at Lyons; think of that. Adieu, dear Madame: it is a delightful thing to live with Madame de Sévigné.

LETTER 179

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, February 12, 1672.

I cannot but be in great pain for you, my dear child, when I think of the concern the death of the poor Chevalier must have given you: you saw him very lately, and that is enough to make you love him, as it furnished you with an opportunity of knowing the many good qualities heaven had endowed him with. It is certain, that no one could be better born, nor possess more just and desirable sentiments: he had, besides, a very pleasing style of countenance, and was extremely fond of you; all this could not fail of rendering him infinitely dear to you and to everyone who knew him. I can easily judge of your grief, by my own; but shall endeavour to amuse you a little with some particulars relating to your own affairs, and with what passes in our world. I have had a long conversation with M. Le Camus, who is so much in our interest, that he gives me his advice on several points: he is disgusted with anything that looks like double-dealing; and, as his own conduct is so much the reverse, he the more easily enters into our views, which he knows to be founded on uprightness and sincerity: these should never be given up on any account; they will always be in fashion. The world may be deceived for a while; but knaves will be found out in the long-run, I am persuaded.

The Marquis de Villeroi has actually started off for Lyons, as I told you. The King ordered Maréchal de Créqui to tell him to withdraw himself to some distance from the Court; it is supposed on account of something he had said at the Comtesse's (*de Soissons*). In short, there are various conjectures. The King asked MONSIEUR, who had just returned from Paris, what was the favourite topic there? Monsieur replied, "The poor Marquis." "And what about him?" said the King. "They say, that he is in disgrace for having spoken in behalf of an unfortunate person." "What unfortunate person?" said the King. "The Chevalier de Lorraine," answered MONSIEUR. "And do you still think of this Chevalier de Lorraine?" said the King: "Have you really a regard for him? Should you be obliged to anyone who would restore him to you?"—"It would," replied MONSIEUR, "be the greatest pleasure I ever experienced in my life." "Well then," said His Majesty, "I will give you this pleasure: a courier has been dispatched to him two days ago; he will soon be here, and then I shall give him to you, and desire that you would look upon yourself as obliged to me for it the remainder of your life, and love and esteem him for my sake: I will do still more, he shall be appointed Field-Maréchal in the army I am to command."—Upon this, MONSIEUR flung himself at the King's feet, and for a long time embraced his knees, and kissed his hand with inexpressible joy. His Majesty raised him up, and said, "This is not the way for brothers to embrace;" and then embraced him in the most cordial and affectionate manner. Every word of this is true, it comes from the best authority; so you may make your own reflections, draw proper inferences, and redouble your present worthy dispositions for the service of your Royal Master. They say, that MADAME[1] is certainly to go, and that several ladies of quality are to accompany her. Various sentiments prevail

[1] The Princess Henrietta, sister of Charles II. of England, to whom she was then going over on a secret negotiation. See Voltaire's *Age of Louis XIV.*, volume II.

at Monsieur's: some have faces of an ell long, others are as much contracted with smiling; the Chevalier de Beuvron's is, it seems, of an immeasurable length. Monsieur de Navailles is to be recalled too, and serve as Lieutenant-General, with M. de Schomberg, in the army to be commanded by Monsieur. The King told the Maréchal de Villeroi, that it was necessary to make his son do a little penance; but that the punishments of this life did not last for ever. You may depend upon the truth of all this. There is nothing I hate so much as false reports, and am as fond of those that are true: if you should not happen to have the same taste for them, you are undone; for you have them here out of number.

La Marans went to Madame de Longueville's the other day alone, and in a deep mourning veil; she met with great slights from everyone: Langlade has sent you word how he repaid her for the ridiculous speeches she made him some time ago, and that he wished you had been behind the door. Would to heaven you had! Madame de Brissac was at Madame de Longueville's at the same time, and with all the appearance of the most excessive grief: but unluckily on the Comte de Guiche falling into conversation with her, she quite forgot her part, and was as much out as in the mad scene on the day of the Princess's death [1], where, just as she should have lost all knowledge, she quite forgot her cue, and took notice of everybody who came in.

Farewell, my lovely child. Do you not think our separation long? It affects me in such a manner that it would be more than I could bear, were it not for the pleasure I take in loving you as I do, in spite of all the misery attending it.

[1] The Princess de Conti. See Letter 177, of 5th February, 1672, in this volume.

LETTER 180

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, February 17, 1672.

Monsieur de Coulanges and I have given a dinner to the President de Bouc; and M. and Madame de Valavoire, the Bishop of Usèz, and Adhémar, were of the party: but hear our misfortune. The President, after having promised to be with us, came to excuse himself, having urgent business at Saint-Germain. We thought we should have hanged ourselves; however, we did as well as we could. Madame de Valavoire brought Buzanval with her; but the President was the chief object of our desire. The dinner was good, genteel, and magnificent. In short, it was an irreparable loss: de Bouc may return perhaps; but the dinner will not. Adhémar was greatly afflicted to hear of his poor brother's death on his arrival; I received him with an aching heart: he slept at Saint-Germain, and promised to call upon me on his return, and have some talk about you. It is a conversation I long for. You say, that I weep for what I can prevent: indeed, my dear, I cannot help weeping sometimes; but I would not have you suppose, that I can set out when I please: I would gladly set out to-morrow; but then your brother is in great want of me at present; and I have other business which will detain me till Easter: therefore you see, my child, that one may have the inclination, yet not the power to set out, and continue to weep.

I saw our Cardinal de Retz very lately: he cannot be comforted for not finding you here. He is going to write to you. He appears to me really vexed to be in Paris without seeing and chatting with his dear niece: you make him wish the Pope were dead.

You will see the Chevalier de Lorraine before we

shall. Monsieur de Boufflers [1], Madame du Plessis's son-in-law, dropped down dead as he was going out of one room into another, without any further ceremony: I saw his widow a little while ago, whom, I believe, will be quickly comforted. Monsieur Isarn, a great wit, has died too, much in the same manner.

I cannot help being uneasy at your being at Aix, while the air there is so full of the small-pox: let me recommend to you to avoid at least all crowds and public places: it is a most dreadful disease. Your daughter has just such a complexion as Madame de Villeroi had, a clear distinct red and white; fine blue eyes; black hair, an elegant turn of countenance, and a chin like wax-work; her lip grows less every day: she never cries, but is all gentleness and affection: she can speak five or six words already: in short, she is a lovely creature, and I love her dearly. Adhémar tells me wonders of your little boy. Madame de Guénégaud pressed me very much to make you and the Coadjutor her compliments of condolence on the death of the Chevalier, so hold her quit on that score.

I have just learned that Adhémar has had a glorious conversation with M. Colbert; he will tell you all about it. The other day as they were talking before the King about Languedoc, they spoke of Provence, which led to the mention of M. de Grignan; and a great deal was said in his favour; Monsieur de Janson joined in the general opinion, and afterwards took occasion to mention his natural indolence of temper: upon which the Marquis de Charost began, and answered in a high tone: "Sir, M. de Grignan is far from being indolent when His Majesty's service is in question; and no one could have exerted himself more, or done better, than he did in the last Assembly; this I know to be fact from good authority." These are the persons we may trust; they are sure to understand things properly. Everybody concurred in his opinion. I shall mention the *Adone* to honest Chapelain,

[1] François, Comte de Boufflers, elder brother of the late Duc of that name.

he will be proud to know you remember him. I always deliver your compliments, and they are returned in the most affectionate manner. My aunt continues very ill. Your poor brother writes very frequently to me, and I to him. This war almost drives me mad, when I think of the danger he must run at the opening of the campaign. How thickly strewed with wormwood is the path of life! My dearest child, adieu; I embrace you.

Monsieur DE COULANGES *writes to Madame* DE GRIGNAN *in her Mother's Letter.*

I say nothing; but I think the more. We shall be at Lyons, about Easter: Madame de Coulanges and I are going there to see the marriage of Mademoiselle du Gué [1], who, without looking further, has chosen M. de Bagnols, whom you know, and who is her first cousin. They have nothing to reproach each other with in point of birth; and as to fortune, Bagnols has a good five and twenty thousand livres a year, which is no bad thing, is it? I hope we shall be at Lyons to do the honours of the place to your mother, when she passes through it on her way to Provence. Adieu, fair Comtesse; I love you still with the same unalterable affection. M. d'Adhémar told me, he had brought M. de Grignan's portrait with him; but I have not yet seen it.

LETTER 181

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, February 19, 1672.

I shall go on Sunday to Saint-Germain with Madame de Coulanges, to have a little conversation with M. de Pomponne; I think it quite necessary: I shall give you an exact account of what passes, that M. de Grignan may have more reason than ever to call me his little minister.

[1] Sister of Madame de Coulanges.

Adhémar has already done wonders on his part; and M. d'Usèz no less on his: in a word, I do not think we are in any danger of being surprised, as we are already so well prepared. But what shall I say to you about the charming portrait M. de Grignan has sent to M. de Coulanges? It is very beautiful, and a great likeness; that of Le Fèvre is mere daubing to it. I have made a vow never to leave Provence till I have one like it, and another of you: there is no money I would so willingly lay out. But pray, my dear child, take care, and do not change for the worse. Poor Madame de Guerchi died lately in consequence of being worn out with child-bearing. I cannot but reverence the husbands who get rid of their wives through excess of love and amorousness.

Guitaud and I have had a great deal of chat about a certain friend of ours (d'Hacqueville), remarkable for his prudence, and of whom he stands so much in awe: he dares not inform you of an accident which is reported to have happened to him, which is neither more nor less than his being passionately in love with the Maréchal's little one-eyed daughter. It is all darts and flames, I am told: he denies it as he would murder; but his actions betray him: he is sensible how ridiculous it is to be in love with such a ridiculous object, and is as much ashamed and confounded as a man can well be; but, in short, the charming eye has smitten him:

> Cet œil charmant qui n'eut jamais
> Son pareil en divins attraits [1].

Poor Guitaud dares not inform you of this himself; I tell it you as a secret, and desire you not to betray it: but, in the meantime, who can help admiring the wonderful powers of the orvietan on this occasion? About two hours ago I saw M. de Gordes, M. d'Usèz, and Adhémar. I am quite in Provence. I had a good deal of chat with Adhémar, who assures me, that I am beloved by you, which

[1] That charming eye which never yet
Its match for heav'nly beauty met. [Translation.]

is the greatest joy I can have in this world. I am delighted with your temper, your fortitude, your reason, and your conduct: in short, I cannot help saying to him:

> De grace montrez moins à mes sens désolés
> La grandeur de ma perte, et ce que vous valez [1].

We never know when to have done talking of you: your friend Madame de Vaudemont will soon be happy; I have this from the same hand as Adhémar: it is still a secret; but there is a set of obliging people in the world, who love to let one into a secret a day or two before the time, and others again are so very reserved, there is no living with them. What sweets can we taste in a friendship so loaded with thorns as this is? It is crushed, it is stifled in its birth. Guitaud and I had quite a dissertation upon this subject yesterday; and I came to a resolution never to form a friendship under such disguises. Adieu, my ever amiable. I am going to sup at M. de La Rochefoucauld's, which obliges me to make my letter so short.

LETTER 182

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, February 24, 1672.

I received both your letters at once; I cannot hear of your being in such grief without finding my own renewed: I perceive that you are truly afflicted, and you have so much reason to be so, that I cannot say a word to you against it. I have felt all you now feel, and the death of the poor Chevalier was not the first opportunity I took of expressing my sense of his numerous virtues: I pity you for having seen him last autumn, it is an addition to your grief: M. d'Usèz, will inform you of what the King said to him on the occasion, in which the whole family joined. He was much regretted by them,

[1] Ah! cease to paint to my distracted senses the greatness of my loss, and of her worth. [Translation.]

and the Queen spoke of him to me with great kindness; but all this will not restore the excellent youth to us. You have so great a regard for all M. de Grignan's family, that I dare say you are as much afflicted at his death as M. de Grignan himself.

I dined to-day, in company with several Provençals, at M. de Valavoire's. He and his wife are the best people in the world. I am sorry she is not with you; she is very sensible and good-natured; I am quite delighted with her. There were Messieurs de Bouc, d'Oppéde, de Gordes, de Souliers, Madame de Buzanval, M. d'Usèz, and M. and Madame de Coulanges; your health was drunk at one of the most elegant repasts I have ever witnessed: we were eager to begin. Much was said of the handsome reception you gave the Duc d'Etrées; he has written in high terms of it to his children. Madame de Rochefort does nothing but storm against you, since she has heard you have written to her cousin without sending her a line. I would advise you to write to her, and endeavour to appease her at any rate. The eternal stay you tell me you are like to make where you are, goes to my very heart: I am not mistress of such strength of reasoning as you, and the cruel reflections I make almost destroy me: I must stop short here.—

Madame de Villars sends her compliments to you and M. de Grignan, and to the Coadjutor. M. Chapelain was in raptures at receiving the remembrance you sent him; he says that the *Adone* [1] is enchanting in some places, but insupportably long. The song in the piece is admirable; there is also the story of a nightingale, who stretches his little throat to drown the notes of a man who plays the lute; he comes and perches just over his head, where he strains himself till at length he falls lifeless at his feet, and is buried in the body of the lute. This description is extremely beautiful. M. and Madame de Coulanges send you a thousand kind remembrances: they are occupied now with the wedding: they set off at Easter, and will be at Lyons to receive me, and I shall return them the com-

[1] An Italian poem of the Cavaliero Marini's.

pliment at Grignan. My aunt [1] continues very ill; she returns you thanks for all your kindnesses; and the Abbé is devoted to you.

LETTER 183

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday evening, February 26, 1672.

I have received the letter you sent me for M. de La Valette; whatever comes from you is dear to me: I will make him have Pélisson for his examiner, to decide whether he is qualified for a Master of the Requests; I cannot believe it till I see it.

Poor MADAME [2] continues still at the point of death; her case is a very extraordinary one. But do you know we are all in an uproar at Paris? The courier is arrived from Spain, and brings word, that the Queen is not only determined to abide by the Pyrenëan treaty, by which she is obliged not to turn her arms against her allies; but is likewise resolved to protect the Dutch with all her power; so that here is a dreadful war upon the point of breaking out; and for what? mere child's play. We shall attack Flanders; the Dutch will join the Spaniards; God grant we may not have the Swedes, the English, and the Germans upon our hands too. I am almost distracted at the news. Oh that some angel would descend from heaven to calm these turbulent spirits, and restore peace among them!

Our Cardinal (*de Retz*) is still very ill: I render him all the little services in my power: he has a great regard for you, and believes you have the same for him. Madame

[1] Madame de La Trousse.

[2] The Dowager MADAME; Marguerite de Lorraine, second wife of Gaston, Duc d'Orléans. She died the 3rd April following the date of this letter.

de Courcelles'[1] affair furnishes matter of great mirth to the wits. The prison-fees are considerably raised since it is known she is to go on the sellette: she is handsomer than ever; and eats, drinks, and is in as good spirits as the best of them: all she complains of is, that she has not met with a single lover in prison.

I will inform you more fully of the affair you wrote to me about the other day; for I do not think that either the Comte de Guiche or M. de Longueville are sufficiently at the bottom of it; however, I will write to you more at large. M. de Boufflers has killed a man since his death[2]: the circumstance was this: they were carrying him about a league from Boufflers to inter him; the corpse was on a bier in a coach; his own curate attended it: the coach upset, and the bier falling upon the curate's neck choked him. Yesterday there was another person upset in returning in his coach from Saint-Germain, and died upon the spot.

Madame Scarron sups with us almost every evening, and is the most agreeable companion imaginable. She takes great delight in playing with your little girl; and thinks her rather pretty than otherwise. The little creature yesterday called the Abbé Têtu her papa: he denied the relationship for very substantial reasons, and we believed him. I embrace you, my love. I told you so many things in my last, that I think I have nothing left to say to you in this. I assure you that I should be at no loss for a subject, were I to tell you all my sentiments concerning you.

[1] One of the most beautiful women of her time: her name was Marie Sidonia de Lénoncourt; her father was Joachim de Lénoncourt, Marquis de Marolles, Governor of Thionville, and Lieutenant-General of the King's forces: her mother was Isabelle Claire-Eugénie de Cromberg, of an illustrious house in Germany. She was the wife of Charles de Champlais, Marquis de Courcelles.

[2] This accident gave birth to a fable of La Fontaine's, called, *The Curate and Death.*

LETTER 184

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Livry, Tuesday, March 1, 1672.

I begin my letter to-day, my dear child, it being Shrove-Tuesday, and shall finish it to-morrow. If you are at Sainte-Marie's, I am at our Abbé's, who has been a little indisposed for these two days: it is not enough to create alarm, but I had rather he were quite well. Madame de Coulanges, and Madame Scarron, would fain have taken me with them to Vincennes; and M. de La Rochefoucauld wanted me to come to his house to hear Molière read one of his plays; but, in truth, I refused it all with a great deal of pleasure: and here am I at my duty, writing to you with a mixture of joy and grief: indeed it is a long time since I wrote to you. So you are retired to Sainte-Marie's! resolved not to lose a particle of the grief you are in for the death of the poor Chevalier: you are for indulging it to its full extent, without having anything to call you off. This application to sorrow, this endeavour to make the most of affliction, savours of one who is not so much concerned as another would be to have occasion for sorrow. I appeal to your own heart.

I find you have gone through the riot of the Carnival without any accident: guard yourself from the infection of the small-pox: I fear for you more than you do for yourself. Madame de La Troche is here: it is true she can come to Paris. Her stay with me last year was entirely set aside by my grief at losing you. Since then, my dear child, you have been everywhere, as you say, except to Paris. Your reflections upon hope are excellent: had they been made by Bourdelot, all the world would have heard of them. Your wonders do not make so great a noise: *The misery of bliss* [1] is so charmingly said that we

[1] *Le malheur du bonheur.*

cannot too much admire a pen that can express such things. You say all that can be said on the subject of hope; and I am so much of your opinion, that I know not whether I ought to go to Provence or not, so great is my apprehension of being obliged to leave it again. I already see how time will then gallop; I know its way: but notwithstanding this fine reflection, my heart joins in the same conclusion with yours, and pants for nothing so earnestly as the moment of my departure from hence. I even flatter myself with the hope that something or other may happen that I may bring you back with me; but there is no talking of these things at such a distance; be assured, however, that no consideration of house or goods shall weigh anything with me: I have not a thought but for you, and in what manner I am to proceed to get somewhat nearer to you: this holds the first place in my mind; all other things follow at hazard.

I have given your letters to the Faubourg: they are admirably well written, and M. de Grignan's reflection is admired by them all. We have often thought the same thing; but you have given it a dress fit to appear in public. I did not tell them your opinion of the maxim which you think resembles a song, though I perfectly agree with you. I will endeavour to learn whether anything more was meant, than the praise of fancy or the passions; if so, it is repugnant to strict philosophy; if not, it requires a clearer explanation.

I supped yesterday evening at Gourville's: there were La Rochefoucauld, La Fayette, the Plessis, and Tournai, all waiting the arrival of the great Pomponne; but the service of that master who is so justly dear to you both, prevented him from joining his best friends: he has a great deal of business upon his hands, on account of the number of dispatches they are sending to all parts, and the great preparations that are being made to begin the war.

The Archbishop of Toulouse[1] has been created a

[1] Pierre de Bonzi, afterwards Archbishop of Narbonne.

Cardinal at Rome: the news came just as M. de Laon[1] was in expectation of this dignity himself, which is a great grief to his friends. They contend, that M. de Laon has sacrificed his own interests to the service of the King, and that, rather than betray those of his country, he has slighted Cardinal Altieri, who in return has served him this trick: they are in hopes he may yet have his rank; but it may be a long time first, and it is always disagreeable to be in expectation.

Benserade said, and I think pleasantly enough, that the Chevalier de Lorraine's return would be a subject of joy to his friends, and of sorrow to his creatures; for not one of them remained faithful to him during his disgrace.

I know, from good authority, that it depends wholly on us to have a peace. The Queen of Spain's answer was not so positive as was reported: she only declared, that she would abide by the Treaty of Peace, which admits of her assisting her allies whenever they stand in need of her assistance. It is the same with regard to the Portuguese: they have promised not to assist the Dutch, but will not give it under their hand: this is the whole affair: if we insist upon their signing, all is lost; if we do not, we shall soon have peace, provided the Spaniards do not declare against us. Time will clear up all this. Farewell, my dearest and best beloved child; I am afraid your great love of solitude will injure your spirits and your eyes, by fixing them too much on the ground, in your deep reveries.

[1] César d'Estrées, Bishop of Laon: he was declared Cardinal some little time afterwards: he had been Cardinal *in-petto* from the August of the foregoing year.

LETTER 185

From Madame LA PRINCESSE PALATINE, *on Hope.*

What can possess you, declared enemies of the greatest blessing of life, and of the most refined pleasures of the heart? What demon can have instigated you to employ your subtle minds in the service of a bad cause? Have you so strong a hatred to hope, as to renounce the hope of praise, and of public esteem? Of what sect, or of what religion can you be, that you declaim thus boldly against the opinion of the wise, and the law of God? How can hope, lovely hope, have injured you, that you would banish it from society, and the intercourse of the good? What has it in common with the unruly passions, and ridiculous desires of the visionary? Why should you confound lawful pretensions with chimerical wishes? May we not wish with a tranquil mind, what we desire with reason? What bitterness of spirit makes you favour a cause so nearly allied to despair? Can this abominable monster, the portion of the cowardly and the damned, seduce your minds sufficiently to render you the advocates of so dreadful an opinion? Are you not aware that in combating the vices, you quarrel with the virtues, of which hope is the most noble and the most useful? What can be done without hope? Is there any action of life into which it does not enter? Even in condemning it, have not you yourselves the hope that you will convince us of the truth of your doctrine, and gain our admiration, by the beauty of your letters, and the novelty of your reasoning? If you do not succeed, the fault is in the cause you maintain, and not in your hope. Hope is in itself all lovely and good; it ennobles the heart of the virtuous, strengthens that of the weak, and injures none but fools, who only make use of it to deceive themselves, and to serve the vanity of their designs. Hope is, in short, the greatest blessing of the miserable. What can it have done

to you, that you thus abuse it? or rather, what has the whole human race done to you, that you would deprive us of a blessing which neither tyranny nor misfortune has been able to wrest from the unhappy? Hope has always paved the way to glory; and there is scarcely a hero, and we can boast of many even in the present day, who has seen his victories exceed the boundary of his hopes. It is allowable to measure our hope by our courage; it is noble to preserve it through every difficulty; but it is equally noble to bear its entire destruction, with the same fortitude with which it was conceived. Suffer us then to hope, since it is a blessing of which you cannot deprive us. Instruct us, if you will, to regulate our wishes; teach us to select our desires; but permit us to console ourselves in our disappointment with the satisfaction that our hopes were well founded. The loss of a long-expected good is but the grief of a day; whereas the hope of possessing it, has been the comfort of many years, and the charm of a thousand delightful hours. No longer then revile this divine and cherished passion. Be it poor[1] or not, its merit is the same; and whatever you may say, meagre hope is better than robust despair. The outrage that was offered to it yesterday in the presence of the most illustrious of its lean partisans (*maigreurs*) in France, has not injured its fame; and despair, fat and plump as it is represented to us, has made no impression upon my heart. I know not whether Judas was fat or lean. The Scriptures that record his despair do not mention his corpulency. Be this as it may, it is certain that he hanged himself for want of hope. His example is not a good one; and in spite of all your arguments, I shall continue to hope during my whole life, and will never hang myself.

[1] Bourdelot had said that Hope was thin, and Despair fat.

LETTER 186

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Tuesday, March 4, 1672.

You say then, my dear child, that you cannot possibly keep hatred alive so long. You are right: it is much the same with me; but then guess what I do instead of it: why I love as ardently, and for as long a time, a certain person that you know. You seem to abandon yourself to a negligence that gives me great concern. You seldom want an excuse for it, it is so much your natural inclination; but, you know I always found fault with you for it, and that I do so still. One might make an excellent personage of Madame du Fresnoi and you: both of you run into extremes; certainly yours may better be borne with than hers, but it is still an extreme. I wonder sometimes at the many nothings that drop from my pen: I never curb it; but am extremely happy that such trifles amuse you. They would be very disagreeable to many people; but I beg you will not regret the want of them when you have me with you, or I shall grow jealous of my own letters.

The dinner which M. de Valavoire gave, entirely eclipsed ours, not for the quantity, but extreme rarity of the dishes. My dear child, how you look! Madame de La Fayette will scold you without mercy. For God's sake dress your head to-morrow: excessive negligence eclipses beauty, and you carry your sadness beyond all bounds. I have made your compliments: those that are sent you in return surpass the number of the stars. *Apropos* of stars. La Gouville was the other day at Madame de St. Lou's, who has just lost her old page. La Gouville, among other things, was talking of her *star* [1], that her

[1] It is a custom in France for people of quality to give their lacqueys and pages names of their own choosing, as La Fleur (flower), Jasmin (jessamine), etc. The page here mentioned by Madame de Gouville was called Etoile (star).

star did this, and her star did that: at length Segrais, who was there, rousing himself as if he had been asleep, said to her, "Do you think then, Madame, that you have a star to yourself? I hear people every where talking about their stars. Why, there are but a thousand and twenty-two in all; and do you suppose out of so small a number everyone can have a star to himself?" He said this with so much humour, and yet with so grave a face, that it put an end to their sorrow in an instant. Your letters were given to Madame de Vaudemont by d'Hacqueville. To tell you the truth, I see him very seldom now. Great fish swallow up the little ones, you know. Farewell, my dearest love: I am getting *Bajazet,* and La Fontaine's *Contes,* to send you for your amusement. M. de La Rochefoucauld gives his maxim the unlimited sense which your philosophy condemns. Epictetus would not have been of his opinion.

LETTER 187

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday evening, March 9, 1672.

Talk to me no more of my letters, I beseech you, my child. I have just received one from you that carries every thing before it; it is lovely, brilliant, full of ideas, and full of affection: the style is so just and concise, that it cannot fail of pleasing to the highest degree even without loving you as I do. I should tell you how much your letters delight me oftener than I do, were it not for the fear of being tiresome; but whether I tell you so or not, be assured I am always delighted with them. Madame de Coulanges is equally so with some passages I showed her, and which it was impossible to keep to myself: there is a vein of good humour and sprightliness that runs through the whole, and gives it a fine effect.

You were for a long time quite buried in melancholy: I was very uneasy at it; but I find the game of the goose

has revived you as it did the Greeks. By the by, I wish you had never played at any other game: a continual run of ill-luck is very provoking and disagreeable: there is no bearing to be the constant butt of fortune: the superiority of others over us, though in trivial concerns, never fails to mortify our vanity, and give us vexation; as Nicole admirably observes. I am very angry with fortune, and am more than ever convinced of her blindness, by the manner in which she has treated you.

You want to know the symptoms of this love, of which I spoke to you the other day [1]. Imprimis, to be the first on all occasions to deny it: to affect an air of great indifference, which is a sure mark of the contrary: the opinion of those who can judge from being near: the public voice: an entire suspension of all motion in the globular machine: a neglect of ordinary concerns to attend to a single one: a continual satirising old people, who are so foolish as to be in love. "Such nonsense! they must be idiots! fools! And with a young woman too! Very pretty indeed! it would become me mighty well! I had rather break both my arms and legs." And then we make answer internally: "Indeed what you say is very true; but, for all that, you are in love: you tell us all these fine things: your reflections are doubtless very just, very true, very tormenting; but for all that, you are in love; reason is on your side, but love is stronger than reason; at the same time you are sick, you weep, you are out of humour, and you are in love." If you should drive M. de Vence [2] to this pass, I desire, my dear, you will make me your confidante. In the meanwhile, you cannot have a more agreeable acquaintance. He is a prelate of distinguished understanding and merit; and one of the greatest geniuses of his age. You have admired his verses; enjoy his prose: he excels equally in both, and deserves to be ranked in the number of your friends. You very pleasantly quote the example of the

[1] The love of d'Haequeville for the one-eyed daughter of Maréchal de Gramont.

[2] Antoine Godeau, Bishop of Vence and Grasse.

lady, who took pleasure in turning the heads of all the monks that came in her way; but it would be a much more glorious thing for you to do this with M. de Vence, who is so famous for the soundness, clearness, and excellence of his. In him you may say you have found a real treasure in Provence: make the most of this, and trust to fortune for the rest.

I forbid you, my dear child, to send me your portrait; if you are looking well, have it painted, but keep the delightful present for me till I come to you; for I should be very sorry to leave it here: so take my advice, and, in the meanwhile, accept of a present from me that surpasses all presents past, present, and to come: this is not saying too much; for it is a pearl necklace worth twelve thousand crowns: a large sum, you will say; but not more than I am willing to bestow on you. In short, examine it well, weigh it, observe how beautifully it is set, and then tell me what you think of it. It is the finest I have ever seen, and has been greatly admired here: I had it from the Venetian Ambassador, our late neighbour, who is dead. I have sent you a book by the desire of my uncle Sévigné [1]. I do not imagine it is a romance: I shall not give him the trouble of sending you La Fontaine's *Contes,* which are but you will judge for yourself.

You are a dear creature, not to be with child; but you seem to have thoughts that way, which make me tremble. Your beauty subjects you to many dangers; because it is useless to you. You say you think it is as well to be with child as not, it is an amusement. A fine reason indeed! but, for heaven's sake, my child, consider that it is utterly destroying your health, and your life.

We do all in our power to amuse our good Cardinal: Corneille has read him a piece of his, which is soon to be brought out. It puts me very much in mind of the beau-

[1] Renaud de Sévigné: he had retired to Port Royal des Champs, where he passed the latter part of his life in exercises of the strictest piety, and died there the 19th of March, 1676. See the *Nécrologie de Port Royal des Champs,* p. 117. Amsterdam edition.

ties of the ancients. Molière is to read him his *Trissotin* [1], which is extremely diverting; and Despréaux will give him his *Lutrin* and *Art of Poetry* [2]: this is all we can do for him. He loves you sincerely, and often talks of you to me, and we seldom find ourselves so ready to finish your praises, as we are to begin them. But! alas! when we reflect that our dear child has been so cruelly torn from us, nothing is capable of comforting us: as for me, I should be very sorry to be comforted: I neither pride myself on courage nor philosophy; but simply follow where my heart leads the way. It was said the other day, and I believe I told you, that the true sign of a good heart was its capacity for loving: if this rule is just, I am become a person of great consequence, and should be not a little vain, had I not a thousand reasons to make me humble.

Adhémar, I believe, loves me well enough; but he bears too great a hatred of the Bishop, and so do you as well. This is owing to the life you lead. Were you here, you would not have time to do it. M. d'Usèz has shown me a memorial of yours, which he has corrected and altered, and with which he will work miracles. Trust wholly to him; you have nothing to do but to send him whatever you think proper, without being in the least apprehensive that he will suffer anything to go out of his hands till he has made it perfect. In everything that comes from you, there is a little air of impetuosity, that is the true mark of the workman, like Bassan's dog [3].

Here is a piece of news for you: attend to me. The King has given the Messieurs de Charost to understand that he will make them Ducs and peers of France; that is to say, they are immediately to have the honours of the Louvre, with an assurance of the first seats in Parliament that are disposed of. The son is made Lieutenant-General

[1] A character in the comedy of *The Learned Ladies*, (*Les Femmes Savantes*).

[2] These two pieces had not then attained the degree of perfection they have done since.

[3] Bassan was a painter who introduced his dog in all his pictures.

of Picardy, a place which has long been vacant, with a pension of twenty thousand francs, and two hundred thousand francs more which he is to receive of M. de Duras, for the place of Captain of the *Gardes de corps,* which he and his father are to resign in his favour. Think of this, and tell me, if M. de Duras does not appear very fortunate to you. This post, for the confidence it implies, and the honour of being constantly about the King's person, is inestimable. While it is his turn to be in waiting, he will follow the King to the army, and have the whole command of the household.

We hear of nothing but war, and you may judge how disagreeable the subject is to me. There are some people here almanac-makers, who pretend to know perfectly how matters will go; but I fancy they will find themselves deceived this campaign. All I hope is, that the cavalry will not be exposed in any of the sieges in Holland: however, we must live to see the cloud dispersed. I have seen the Marquis de Vence, and he looked so young, that I asked him how his mamma did. Coulanges set me right; and Cardinal de Retz changed the conversation by talking of you. I am always wishing for Adhémar to repeat to me again how much you love me. You assure me yourself, that it is with a degree of tenderness answerable to mine. If I am not contented with that, surely I am very hard to be pleased.

I have just received your letter of Ash-Wednesday: indeed, my child, you quite embarrass me with your commendation and thanks. This is only putting me in mind of what I would do for you, and makes me sigh that it is so little in my power to satisfy my inclination. Would I could so load you with benefits, as to oblige you to become ungrateful; for, as we have often said, that is the only thing that is left when one has been so much obliged as to be no longer able to make a return: but, alas! I am not happy enough to reduce you to such a strait. Your thanks are more than sufficient to repay all I can do. How amiable you are, and how pleasantly you express yourself

upon the subject! But now about this brelan [1], what a folly is it to lose so much money at such a rascally game! It has been banished from us for a downright cut-throat. We do things in a more serious manner. You play against all chance: you lose for ever; take my advice, and do not continue it: consider it is throwing money away without having any amusement for it; on the contrary, you have paid five or six thousand francs to be the mere dupe of fortune. But I am rather too warm, my dear, and must say with *Tartuffe,* "'tis through excess of zeal." And now I mention plays, here is *Bajazet* for you: if I could send you Champmêlé at the same time, you would find more beauties in it, for without this actress the piece loses half its merit.—I am just crazy about Corneille: he is going to give us *Pulchérié*, where we shall trace

La main qui crayonna
La mort du grand Pompée et l'ame de Cinna [2].

In short, everything must bow to his superior genius. Here is La Fontaine's Fable too on the adventure of M. de Boufflers's curate, who was killed in the coach by his dead patron [3]. There was something very extraordinary in the affair itself: the fable is pretty; but not to be compared with the one that follows it: I do not understand the *Milk-pot* [4].

I frequently hear from my poor boy. This war vexes me extremely: in the first place, on his account, and then on account of some others, that I have a great regard for. Madame de Vaudemont is at Antwerp, and seems to have no intention of returning; her husband is against us. Madame de Courcelles [5] will be on the sellette soon: I do not know whether she will touch the adamantine

[1] A game of cards.

[2] The same great hand, that with such matchless art
Drew Pompey's death, and painted Cinna's heart. [Translation.]

[3] See Fable XI. of Book VII. p. 54. Paris edition of 1746.

[4] Another fable of La Fontaine's (*Le pot au lait*), the moral of which is the same as the foregoing. See Fable X. of Book VII., the same edition.

[5] See Letter 183, of 26th February, 1672, in this volume.

heart of Monsieur d'Avaux [1] in that situation; but hitherto he has been as severe to her in prison, as he was in his reply. My dear child, I know no bounds to my writing, and yet I must put an end to it at last: when I write to other people, I care not how soon I have done; but I love nothing so well as to write to you. I have a thousand good wishes for you from M. de La Rochefoucauld, our Cardinal, Barillon, and especially from Madame Scarron, who knows perfectly well how to please me by praising you. She admires you unboundedly. As for M. de Coulanges and his wife, the Abbé, my aunt, my cousin, La Mousse, there is but one cry amongst them, and that is, to remember them to you; but I am not at all in a humour to make litanies: there are many even now that I have forgotten: but this is enough to last for a long time. I continue still very fond of my dear little girl, notwithstanding her brother is such a beauty.

LETTER 188

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, March 11, 1672.

I have undertaken to-day to write you the shortest letter that ever was written: we shall see. The reason of my Wednesday's letters being so immoderately long is this, that I receive one of yours on Mondays; I immediately sit down to answer it: I begin it, and lay it by again. Tuesday, if any business or news presents itself, I resume my letter, to send you an account of what passes. Wednesday, I receive another letter from you, I have that to answer, and then to conclude. All this, you see, must necessarily make a little volume. Sometimes too a singular thing happens, and that is, that, forgetting what I have

[1] The President de Mêmes, father of the chief President of that name.

told you in the beginning of my letter, I write the same thing again at the end; for I never read my letter over till I have quite finished it; and when I find the stupid repetitions I have made, I make such faces at myself as would frighten you; but that is all, for it is then too late to think of altering it, and so I let it go as it is, and make up my packet. I tell you this, once for all, that you may know how to excuse this instance of dotage, when you meet with it again. Mademoiselle de Méri has sent you some of the prettiest shoes in the world; I observed one pair, among the rest, so very small, that they seem fit for nothing but to keep one's bed in. Do you remember how you laughed at this idea one evening? And now, my dear child, I desire you will not be at the pains of thanking me for all my good intentions, nor for every little trifle I send you; but reflect upon the principle that actuates me; passionate love and tenderness is not repaid with thanks: consult your heart, and it will teach you other ways of being grateful. I have seen the Chevalier and the Abbé de Valbelle: I am become a Provençal; I openly avow it; and all the Bretons are jealous. Farewell, my love; I fancy you know how truly I am yours, without my telling you so; and for that reason I have resolved not to write a long letter this time; though, if I knew anything that would divert you, I should certainly add it; for I should take no pleasure in adhering too strictly to this foolish resolution.

LETTER 189

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, March 16, 1672.

You talk to me of my departure: alas! my dear, I languish in the pleasing hope of it; nothing now stops me, but my poor aunt [1], who is dying with violent pain and dropsy: it breaks my heart to see her sufferings, and

[1] Henriette de Coulanges, Marquise de La Trousse.

to hear the tender and affecting manner in which she talks to me: her courage, patience, and resignation, are altogether admirable. Monsieur d'Hacqueville and I observe her distemper from day to day; he sees my inmost heart, and knows what grief it is to me not to be at liberty at present: I am entirely guided by him, and we shall see between this and Easter, whether her disorder increases as much as it has done since I came hither; if it does, she will die in our arms: but if she receives any relief, and is likely to languish for any length of time, I shall then set out as soon as M. de Coulanges comes back. Our poor Abbé is as vexed at this as myself; but we shall be able to judge how it will turn out by next month. I can think of nothing else: you cannot wish to see me so much as I do to embrace you; so put some bounds to your ambition, and do not hope ever to equal me in that respect.

My son tells me, they lead a wretched life in Germany, and are working all in the dark. He was greatly concerned at the death of the poor Chevalier. You ask me if I am as fond of life as ever: I must own to you that I experience mortifications, and severe ones too; but I am still unhappy at the thought of death: I consider it so great a misfortune to see the termination of all my pursuits, that I should desire nothing better, if it were practicable, than to begin life again. I find myself engaged in a scene of confusion and trouble: I was embarked in life without my own consent, and know I must leave it again: that distracts me; for how shall I leave it? in what manner? by what door? at what time? in what disposition? Am I to suffer a thousand pains and torments that will make me die in a state of despair? Shall I lose my senses? Am I to die by some sudden accident? How shall I stand with God? What shall I have to offer to him? Will fear and necessity make my peace with him? Shall I have no other sentiment, but that of fear? What have I to hope? Am I worthy of heaven? or have I deserved the torments of hell? Dreadful alternative! Alarming uncertainty! Can there be greater madness than to place our eternal salvation

in uncertainty? Yet what is more natural, or can be more easily accounted for, than the foolish manner in which I have spent my life? I am frequently buried in thoughts of this nature, and then death appears so dreadful to me, that I hate life more for leading me to it, than I do for all the thorns that are strewed in its way. You will ask me then, if I would wish to live for ever? Far from it; but if I had been consulted, I would very gladly have died in my nurse's arms; it would have spared me many vexations, and would have insured heaven to me at a very easy rate: but let us talk of something else.

I am quite provoked that you have received *Bajazet* from any hand but mine: that fellow Barbin [1] has served me this trick, out of spite, because I do not write Princesses de Cléves and de Montpensier [2]. You form a very just and true judgment of *Bajazet,* and you will find that I am of your opinion: I wish I could send you Champmêlé to enliven it a little. The character of Bajazet wants life, and the manners of the Turks are ill preserved: their marriages have less ceremony; the plot is badly managed; and we are at a loss to account for so much slaughter: the piece has doubtless its beauties; but there is nothing superlative; nothing perfect; none of those fine strokes, that, like Corneille's, make one tremble. Let us be cautious how we compare Racine with him; the difference between them is great: the plays of the latter are in many places cold and feeble; nor will he ever be able to surpass his *Alexander* and *Andromache.* Many persons consider *Bajazet* as inferior to both these, and it is my opinion also, if I may be allowed to give it. Racine's plays are written for Champmêlé, and not for posterity [3]; whenever he grows old and ceases to be in love, it will be seen whether I am mistaken or not. Long live then our old friend Corneille; let us

[1] A famous bookseller of that name.

[2] Two romances written by Madame de La Fayette, by which Barbin made a great deal of money.

[3] The event has proved by *Mithridate, Phèdre,* and *Athalie,* that Madame de Sévigné's judgment partook of the prejudice of the times in which she wrote.

forgive the bad lines we occasionally meet with for the sake of those divine sallies that so often transport us, those masterly strokes that bid defiance to imitation. Despréaux has said as much before me; and it is in general the opinion of every one of good taste; let us therefore maintain it.

I send you a witticism of Madame Cornuel's, which has highly diverted the crowd. Young M. Tambonneau has quitted the long robe, and taken to the jacket and trousers: in short, he is resolved to go to sea; I do not know in what way the land has offended him: however, somebody told Madame Cornuel that he was going to sea. "Lord bless the man!" said she, "has he been bitten by a mad dog?" As this was said off-hand, it raised a great laugh.

Madame de Courcelles is greatly embarrassed. All her petitions have been rejected; but she says she is still in hopes that she shall have some favour shown her, as men are to be her judges. Our Coadjutor, for instance, would do nothing for her; you tell me he is at present occupied like St. Ambrose. I think you may be very well satisfied that your girl was made after his *image and likeness,* without having your son like him too; but with all due deference to the beauty of the Coadjutor, where did the little fellow get his handsome mouth, and all the rest of his charms? I find, after all, he is like his sister; this resemblance puzzles me a good deal. I love you dearly, my child, for not being pregnant; content yourself then with being *uselessly handsome,* for the pleasure of not being continually dying. I cannot pity you for having no butter in Provence, because you have admirable oil and excellent fish. Ah! my dear, I can easily judge how people like you must employ their time and thoughts among your Provençals: I should think of them just as you do, and pity you from my soul for being obliged to pass so many of the choicest years of your life amongst them. I am so little desirous of making a figure at your Court in Provence, and have formed so just a conception of it, from what I know of that in Brit-

tany; that for the same reason, that in less than three days after being at Vitré, I wished for nothing so much as to return to my *Rocks,* so I solemnly declare to you the sole object of my desire is to pass the summer with you at Grignan, and no where else. My St. Laurent wine is at Adhémar's; I shall have it to-morrow: I thanked you for it long ago in my heart; that is very obliging, you will say. M. de Laon is very well pleased at the manner in which he was made a Cardinal. I am told that M. de Montausier [1], in talking to the Dauphin about the dignity of Cardinal, told him, that it depended entirely upon the Pope, and that if he had a mind to make a Cardinal of a groom, he might. Just at that instant Cardinal Bonzi entered; the Dauphin seeing him, asked him, if it were true that the Pope could make a groom a Cardinal. M. de Bonzi was a little surprised at first, till guessing the affair, he replied, that doubtless the Pope might make choice of whom he pleased for that dignity; but that he had never heard of His Holiness taking a Cardinal from his stables. I had this story from the Cardinal de Bouillon.

I have had a great deal of conversation with M. d'Usèz; he will acquaint you with the conference he has had too; it is an admirable one; his understanding is so clear, and his words, in general, so well chosen, that they cannot fail of having great weight on these occasions: in short, he says and does everything well. What was told you of Jarzé was reported, but not with any degree of certainty: they pretend that the lady's joy was excessive on account of the Chevalier de Lorraine's return. It is reported likewise, that the Comte de Guiche and Madame de Brissac are so much at cross purposes with one another, that there is need of an interpreter between them. Write a line or two to our Cardinal; he loves you; the Faubourg [2]

[1] The Duc de Montausier was not only allowed by everyone to be utterly incapable of flattery or falsehood; but was even at a loss in the common arts of dissimulation at Court.

[2] Meaning the Duc de La Rochefoucauld and Madame de La Fayette, who lived both in the Faubourg (or suburb) of St.-Germain, and to whom Madame de Sévigné made frequent visits.

loves you; and Madame Scarron loves you; she is to pass her Lent here, and spends almost every evening with us. Barillon is here still: and would to heaven, my dear child, that you were here too!

LETTER 190

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, March 23, 1672.

Madame de Villars, M. Chapelain, and another person, are charmed with your sentiments on ingratitude: do not think me ridiculous; I know to whom I show these short extracts of your letters: I know whom I have to deal with, and preserve all the necessary precautions of time and place; but, in short, you have sometimes a delightful way of saying things: you may believe me; I know well what I state. I will read one day or other some passages to you that will please you; especially that upon ingratitude.

I like your little history of the painter extremely [1]; but, poor man, he must die! Your hair curling *naturally* with curling-irons, powdered *naturally* with a pound of powder, and the *natural* vermilion of your cheeks, laid on with carmine, is very amusing; but after all, you were as handsome as an angel: I am very glad you are well enough to sit to him for your picture: and that in the midst of all your negligence, you can preserve so many charms. Madame Scarron has received your embassies: there are no praises she does not bestow on you, no esteem she thinks too great to entertain for you.

The Chancellor will not have so magnificent a funeral as was expected; they wanted a Prince of the blood to head the ceremony. The Prince said, he was indisposed;

[1] A painter in Provence, of the name of Fauchier, who was seized with so violent a fit of the colic, while painting Madame de Grignan's portrait in the dress of a Magdalen, that he died the next morning.

the Duc said, it might have done very well in former times, but at present Princes were of more importance than they were then: the Princes de Conti said, they could not do what the Duc had refused to do: in short, the Chancellor's family are in despair about it; it was to no purpose to urge the instance of the Chancellor de Bellièvre, whose funeral was honoured with the presence of a Prince de Conti.

The Comte de Guiche told us wonders the other day about the wits of your warm climate; he says he never passed his time more agreeably than whilst among them. I did not remember you had ever mentioned a single person to me as the least distinguished for wit or understanding. Believe me, my dear, it is with the greatest concern that I find you so resigned to our separation, while I feel it in my very marrow, without being able to receive the least comfort. As to my journey, it now depends wholly upon my aunt; but in a month's time we shall see what we have to expect: this is now the only thing that stops me, otherwise I should set out with M. and Madame de Coulanges; the Abbé and I do nothing but pine for the day of our departure. Everything seems to happen purposely to vex and torment me. I am busied now in getting my son's equipage ready; besides accepting and returning bills of exchange. Everybody is in debt, or occupied with their departure. It is reported the small-pox is at Grignan: is it true? If so, I shall be a little easier at being detained here. After all, my dear, be assured, that we think of nothing but setting out; no consideration takes place of that desire, nor of our journey; even the hot weather shall not stop me a moment.

You ask me what my aunt's disorder is. It is a flatulent and watery dropsy together: she is swelled to an amazing size; milk, which was the only thing that used to give her relief, can no longer repair the great waste of moisture; she is quite exhausted, her liver is affected, and she is sixty-six; such is her disorder: next month will determine whether she will live or die: I pass many hours with her, and am greatly concerned to see her in such a state. What

you say upon the *adamantine* heart is admirable; it would be very convenient to have such a one, not in the sense we mean, but literally adamantine; for want of it one is subject to a thousand torments. It is certain that love is a proud thing, and so it ought to be. M. de Grignan is very happy in being so good a Christian; I hope he will be able to convert me.

Monsieur de Lauzun's post is not yet disposed of. You may make your own reflections upon that, as well as upon his fire-affair; it would have been a curious adventure to have burnt poor M. Fouquet, who bears his confinement so nobly, without giving himself up to fruitless despair. Nothing is talked of but war: the King has two hundred thousand men on foot: all Europe is in motion; and it is very plain, as you say, that the poor globular machine is left to itself. The Cardinal (de Retz) and I often talk of you; he has a sincere regard for you: and I, what have I, think you? My poor aunt returns you thanks for your kind remembrance of her. La Mousse trembles for his philosophy. Say a word or two to the Cardinal about your machines; your machines that love; your machines that have the power of choice; your machines that are jealous, and have fears. Go, go! Descartes never could pretend to make us believe all this.

LETTER 191

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, March 30, 1672.

Are you not too good, my dear child? You say you love my letters; you wish them always to be long, and you flatter me with the pleasing idea that you do not like them so well when they are short: but then poor Grignan has enough to do, if his complaisance for you obliges him to read such volumes. I remember he used to wonder how people could read long letters; he seems to be much al-

tered in his opinion: but I depend upon your prudence, not to let him see what you think will tire him. I have to ask your pardon: I thought you had not answered the Cardinal's letter, but I find you have, and extremely well too. I must also own to you, that I have wickedly suppressed the compliments of Madame de Villars. I have often mentioned her to you in my letters, and have taken care not to tell you all she has said to me: be not angry with her, she loves and admires you: I see her very frequently, she is delighted to talk of you, and to read passages of your letters; this attaches me to her extremely. She will set out at Easter, notwithstanding the war; she must come back as she can if the Spaniards are wicked. As they have plenty of money, these Villars [1], to travel about and make a great show, it is a trifle not worth their attention. They say, that the English have engaged and defeated five sail of Dutch men of war; and that the Ambassador told the King, that his master [2] had already begun the war by sea, and hoped that he would now make his promise good, and begin it by land.

You know, my child, what an esteem I have for the name of Roquesante [3], and how much I venerate his virtue. You may be sure that his recommendation and yours must have great weight with me; but unfortunately in this case my credit and good will are not equally strong. You have given the President in question such an excellent character, that it would be an honour to have it in my power to serve him: at all events I will mention it; but really everything is now kept such a profound secret at Versailles, that we must wait with patience the decision of the oracle. As to M. de Roquesante, if you forgot to make my compliments to him, very particularly, you and

[1] Irony! they were very poor. M. de Villars was going as Ambassador to Madrid.

[2] Charles II. of England.

[3] One of the Counsellors of the Parliament of Aix, a man of real merit, and one of the commissioners appointed to try M. Fouquet: he gave such clear proofs of integrity and discernment, that Madame de Sévigné ever afterwards held him in the highest esteem.

I shall certainly quarrel. You shudder at our Abbé's fever; I am obliged to you: but as you shudder by yourself, and the good Abbé did not shudder at all, you see plainly, that I did not shudder: his disorder was a constant flux; he has acted with prudence; and, I am persuaded, has added twelve years to his life: God grant it. I have said for you all you desired me to say, and he is much pleased. My aunt is continually thanking you: the state she is in would pierce the most insensible heart: she swells every day, and nothing she takes has the least effect: she said to me not long ago, "I am a lost woman, my child." She prepares herself for death, and speaks of it without fear: she only expresses her astonishment, that so much pain and torture should be required to put an end to one so feeble as she is. Some kinds of death are certainly very dreadful and cruel; hers is the most deplorable that can be imagined: she receives all the little attentions I pay her with the greatest affection; I bestow them with the same feeling, and am, indeed, so much afflicted at the agony I see her suffer, and the despair my poor cousin is in, that I cannot refrain from tears.

I will tell you, my dear child, a thought that has occurred to me on the frequent losses you and M. de Grignan sustain at cards. I would have you both be cautious. It is not pleasant to be made a dupe of; and be assured, that it is not natural to be perpetually the winner or the loser. It is not long since I was let into the tricks of the Mansion de la Vieuville. You will remember, I suppose, how our pockets were picked there. You are not to imagine everybody plays as fairly as you do yourself. The concern I have for your interest makes me say so much; and as it comes from a heart entirely devoted to you, I am persuaded you will not be displeased at it. Neither will you, I suppose, at knowing that Kéroual [1], whose fortune had been predicted before she left this kingdom, has fully verified the prediction. The King of England was passionately fond of her, and she, on her side, had no aversion

[1] Afterwards Duchess of Portsmouth, mistress of Charles II.

to him: in short, she is now about eight months gone with child. Poor Castlemaine [1] is turned off: such is the fate of mistresses in that kingdom. While I am upon this subject, I must tell you, with all due deference to the wisdom of M. de Grignan, that the son of F—— [2] and the Chevalier de Lorraine, (I do not know whether you can understand me) is brought up openly and indiscriminately with the children of Madame d'Armagnac, and that at the return of the Chevalier they played him a trick to prove the strength of blood. He confirmed all they said about the child, and thought him so pretty and became so strongly attached to him, that at last they told him the truth: he was delighted. Madame d'Armagnac continues her kindness, and educates him under the name of the Chevalier de Lorraine. If you know this already it will not entertain you much. Adhémar is the proper person to relate these things to you: I feel less inclination to relate news to you, knowing he is more in the way of hearing it than I am.

I have received your letter of the twenty-third, written on the wings of the wind, as was mine of Friday last: let me tell you, my dear child, it is a charming one, though not an answer to mine; but it is worth a thousand answers; and it is thus then that you write to me when you have nothing to say! Indeed I am in the highest degree delighted with it. It contains a thousand kind and tender things; and I must own, that I take pleasure in flattering myself with their being all true. But who is this Breton whom you serve for my sake? I assure you all the Provençals find an interest in me.

The poor Abbé [3] is to make his public act to-day: what a joke! They are going to dispute with him, to plague and torment him, and use all their endeavours to

[1] The Countess of Castlemaine, a former mistress of Charles II.

[2] This initial is intended to designate Mademoiselle de Fiennes, Maid of Honour to Madame, whose reputation was somewhat equivocal.

[3] Louis-Joseph Adhémar de Monteil, brother of M. de Grignan, nominated in 1680 to the Bishopric of Evreux, and afterwards to that of Carcassonne.

puzzle him: and yet he must answer to all. Nothing in my opinion, can be more unjust than such proceedings, which must sour the mind greatly. You talk about the weather; our winter has been delightful: we have had for three months together a fine clear frost; now it is over, and spring begins to make its appearance. Nothing can be more prudent than you are: how comes it then that you are so extravagant? I am shocked at the inconstancy of M. de Vardes: he was not so till his passion began to cool, and has no other excuse than that he can love no longer: this is very cruel; but I had rather it were so, than to be left for another: this is an old quarrel between us: indeed, there are many things which I dislike in M. de Vardes. If Corbinelli wishes me in Provence, it is no more than I do myself every day of my life.

M. and Madame de Coulanges are much indebted to you for all your kindness: they intend writing to you. I shall see them set out with great regret. M. de Coulanges fully purposes to see *Jacquemart* and *Marguerite* [1] before he dies. As for his wife, she is to go to Grignan, where, I hope, we shall receive her together, after she has done me the honours of Lyons. I was told this evening, that the Abbé Grignan had performed wonders at the Sorbonne to-day: our Cardinal is in raptures at it.

LETTER 192

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, April 1, 1672.

What you have written to Guitaud, my dear child, respecting the hopes you are in of seeing me shortly in Provence, has filled me with transports of joy. You can easily judge the pleasure one has in hearing such things from a third person, however well one might know them

[1] Two figures that strike the hour on the clock in the belfry at Lambesc.

before: yet let me assure you, that even this cannot add to the desire I have of coming to you, for it is infinite. My aunt is my only hindrance: she is so very ill, that I do not think it possible for her to continue long in her present condition: I will let you know how she goes on; for this is the thing of greatest consequence to me at present.

I saw Madame de Verneuil yesterday, who has returned from Verneuil and the jaws of death: a milk diet has restored her to her health: she is handsome and well shaped: there is no longer any dispute between her bodice and mine; she is not so red and bloated as she used to be, but is quite pleasing: she is kind, obliging, and can speak well of people: she desired a thousand kind remembrances to you.

Madame de Coulanges and M. de Barillon played yesterday the scene between Vardes and Mademoiselle de Torias till we were all of us ready to cry: they out-did themselves in it. As to Champmêlé, she is so extraordinary a performer, that in your life you never saw any like her: in short, it is the actress, and not the play, that the town runs after. I went to *Ariane* wholly for the sake of seeing her: the play itself is dull and insipid, the rest of the players execrable; but when Champmêlé appears, you hear a general murmur of applause, everybody is charmed, the whole house sympathises in her distress.

The Chevalier de Lorraine went the other day to see La Fienne, she wanted to put on the forsaken nymph, and affected a great deal of confusion at the sight of him. The Chevalier, with his frank open countenance, was resolved to put her out of her pain at once, and said to her, "What ails you, Mademoiselle? What makes you so sad? Is there anything extraordinary in what has happened between us? We loved each other once, and now we do not. Constancy is no longer looked upon as a virtue in our age: it will be best for us to forget what has passed, and behave like other people. This is a very pretty dog of yours: who gave it you:" And so ended this curious love-affair.

What book are you reading now, my dear? I am

reading *The Discovery of the Indies* by Christopher Columbus, which diverts me exceedingly; but your little girl diverts me still more: I love her dearly, and I do not see how I can help it: she is very fond of your portrait, and is talking to it so prettily, that I must go and kiss her.

LETTER 193

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, April 6, 1672.

My aunt's illness makes me hardly know where I am, or what I do: the Abbé and I are quite out of patience about it, and are resolved, if it should be likely to last, to set out for Provence; for even good-nature should have its bounds. You may always rest assured, that I have a stronger inclination to set out, than you can have for me to do so. You may think this is saying a great deal, and so do I too; but it is impossible to say more than I think on that subject. I never fail to tell my aunt of your kind remembrances. Though she is sensible that she is very near death, yet her constant attention to the feelings of others makes her dissemble her sentiments, and seem to have hope in medicines, that she is certain can no longer have any efficacy, solely to prevent driving my poor cousin to despair; but, when she finds herself at liberty, and can give vent to her words, then we see what her true thoughts are, and that she looks upon the approach of death with the greatest calmness, resignation, and constancy.

I am frightened at the dangers that attend you in Provence. Your dear little boy however has escaped the smallpox; but then the plague: what do you think of that? I am dreadfully alarmed at the thoughts of it: it is a disease that has not its equal, and from which the sun of your climate is ill calculated to defend those on whom he shines. I desire his Excellency the Governor will, in his wisdom, give all necessary orders upon the occasion.

Saturday last the Duc gave a hunting-match to *the Angels* [1], and afterwards a supper at St. Maur, of the most delicate fish the sea could afford. From thence they returned to a small house near the Condé Mansion, where after the clock had struck twelve, for which they waited very scrupulously, there was served up the most elegant *media-noche* that ever was seen, consisting of the richest and most exquisite viands of all sorts. This little excursion has not been very well looked upon, and Maréchal de Grancey's great good-nature has been the subject of general admiration. The company consisted of the Comtesse de Soissons, Mesdames de Coëtquen and Bordeaux, several gentlemen, and, among the rest, the Chevalier de Lorraine: there were hautboys, bagpipes and violins, but not a word of the Duchesse or Lent; the one was in her own apartment, and the other in the cloisters. The ladies were all brown beauties; it has been thought they wanted a little yellow to set them off.

M. de Coulanges is in despair about the painter's death [2]. Did not I say he would die? This gives a great grace to the beginning of the history; but the catastrophe is very melancholy and vexatious for me, who made so sure of the fair *Magdalen with her fine natural curls* [3].

I am charmed to find you are not with child. Ah! my dear, enjoy awhile the pleasure of being in health: take some respite, and do not add this vexation to the many others I meet with in life. The old MADAME [4] is dead of an apoplexy, to which she has had a tendency for more than a year. So now there is the Palace of Luxembourg for MADEMOISELLE, and we shall take possession of it soon. MADAME had cut down all the trees on her side of the garden through pure contradiction; that beautiful garden

[1] Mesdames de Marcei and de Grancey, daughters of the Maréchal de Grancey.

[2] The painter mentioned in Letter 190, of March 23rd, 1672, in this volume.

[3] See the note to the above-mentioned Letter 190.

[4] Marguerite de Lorraine, second wife of Gaston of France, Duc d'Orléans.

looks quite ridiculous: Providence, however, has saved it from ruin. MADEMOISELLE has nothing to do now, but to cut them down on both sides, and then put Le Nôtre [1] into them, who will soon convert them into a second Tuileries. She could not be prevailed upon to see her mother-in-law when she was dying: this was not very heroic. M. de Lorraine's treaty of marriage is broken off after all: this is a business for your poor friend [2]. I have made your compliments to Duras and the Charosts. The Marquis de Villeroi will not be permitted to leave Lyons this campaign: his father was assured of this, on asking leave for his son to return to the army. The true reason of his disgrace is not known. M. de La Rochefoucauld is relapsed into so dreadful a fit of the gout, accompanied with so violent a fever, that he is worse than you have ever seen him: he entreats you to pity him; and I would defy you to see him without being affected. My dear child, I must leave you. I repent having wished for a heart of adamant; for I should be very sorry not to love you as much as I do, whatever pain it may cost me. Do not you wish for it neither: let us keep the hearts we have: you know very well the way to mine.

LETTER 194

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, April 8, 1672.

War is at length declared, and nothing is now talked of but departures. Canaples has asked the King's permission to serve in the English army; and is gone, very much displeased at not having been employed in France. Maréchal du Plessis is not to leave Paris: he is become a sober citizen, and a canon; he has laid aside his laurels, and will be a mere observer of events: nor do I think his part a bad one, considering the great reputation he has

[1] The most famous gardener of his time.

[2] The Princesse de Vaudemont.

gained. He told the King, he could not help envying his children the honour of serving His Majesty; and that he now wished for nothing so much as death, since he could no longer be of use to him. The King embraced him, and said, "Maréchal, the end of all our labours is to gain a reputation similar to what you have acquired: it must be pleasant to rest after so many victories[1]." I am of the same opinion, and think it a great happiness not to be obliged to trust that fame to the capricious power of fortune which a long life has obtained. Maréchal Bellefonds has gone to La Trappe to spend the Passion-week; before he went he talked in very high terms to M. de Louvois, about an abatement Louvois wanted to make in his post of General under the Prince: he made His Majesty the arbitrator, and came off with honour.

The Queen constantly attacks me about your children and my journey to Provence; and is not pleased, that your son is like you, and your daughter like her father: I always make the same answer. Madame Colbert very often talks to me of your beauty; and, indeed, who does not? Do you know, my child, that it is absolutely necessary for you to come and look at us a little here? I will pave the way for you in a manner that shall take all the trouble off your hands. I have spoken to M. de Pomponne about a first President: he says he knows nothing of the matter yet, but believes it will be some stranger.

My aunt is now so ill, that I do not think she will be long a hindrance to me: she is almost suffocated, and swells every day more and more: there is no seeing her without being affected: and I shall be still more deeply affected by the loss of her: you know how much I always loved her. It would have been a great comfort to me to have left her with some prospect of a cure, that she might have been restored to us again. I will let you know the end of this long and melancholy illness.

M. and Madame de Chaulnes are going to Brittany.

[1] He was at the head of the King's army in the war of the Fronde, and had even beaten Turenne near Rhetel.

There is no residence for Governors now but their governments. We are on the eve of a sharp contest, which gives me concern. Your brother is dear to me: we are very good friends: he has an affection for me, and studies to please me, and I, on my side, am a good *step-mother,* and busy about his affairs. I should be very unjust, to complain of either of you: you are both of you too good in your several ways. This is all you will have from me to-day, my dear love. I had a Provençal, a Breton, and a Burgundian, at my toilet this morning.

LETTER 195

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, April 13, 1672.

I must own to you, my dear child, that the loss of my letters gives me great uneasiness; but do you know what would give me greater uneasiness? the loss of yours. I have known what it is, nothing can be more painful. But, my dear, I am quite charmed with you; you write Italian like Cardinal Ottoboni, and even mix Spanish with it; witness *Manera,* which is not a word of ours: and as to your phrases, I am sure I could do nothing like them: amuse yourself also in speaking it; it is a very pretty accomplishment; you pronounce it well, and have time enough upon your hands; so pray go on with it, and let me be agreeably surprised with finding you an adept on my arrival. You are very good and obedient in not being with child: I thank you for it from the bottom of my heart; take as much care to please me, by avoiding the small-pox. I am frighted at your sun: why it burns people's brains! Apoplexies are as frequent in your country, as the vapours are with us; and I find your head swims sometimes as well as the rest. Madame de Coulanges is in hopes of keeping hers sound at Lyons, and is making great prepara-

tion for her defence against the Governor [1]: if she comes to Grignan, it will be to give you an account of her victory, and not to tell you of her defeat; for I do not think the Marquis will so much as put on the appearance of the lover; for there are persons who keep a good look out upon him, and are not to be imposed upon. He is almost distracted at not going to the war, as I am at not setting out with M. and Madame de Coulanges; it was a thing fully agreed upon by us all, but for the unhappy condition of my aunt: however, we must have patience; nothing shall stop me, when I am once at liberty. I have just bought a travelling coach, have ordered riding-habits to be made; and, in short, am ready at all points. Never did I long for anything so much: depend upon it I will not lose a moment. It is my ill-fortune always to meet with disappointments, that befall no one else.

I wish I could send our Cardinal to you; his conversation would be a great amusement to you, for you have nothing that I can see to divert you where you are; but instead of the road to Provence, he is going to Commerci. They say that the King a little regrets the departure of Canaples: he had a regiment, and was broken: he applied for ten several Abbeys, and was refused them all: he desired to serve as aide-de-camp this campaign; he was refused that too: upon which he wrote a letter to his brother, full of the profoundest respect for His Majesty, and then went on board the ship of the Duke of York [2], who has a great regard for him.

The Maréchal de Gramont was so transported the other day, at a sermon of Bourdaloue's, that he cried out, in the middle of a passage that struck him, "By God he is right." Madame burst out a laughing, and the sermon was interrupted so long that nobody knew what would be the consequence. If your preachers are as you represent them, I am apt to think they will be in no great danger of their being interrupted by such praises. Farewell, my

[1] The Marquis de Villeroi.

[2] Afterwards James II., King of England.

dearest love: when I think of the countries that separate us, I am almost beside myself, and can have no rest. I am very angry with Adhémar for changing his name [1]: he shall be called *the little unnatural* [2].

LETTER 196

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Good-Friday, April 15, 1672.

You are well acquainted with the kind of life I lead, my dear child; to add to which I have the mortification of being separated from you, and of not being able to fly to you so soon as I could wish: my extreme impatience makes me sometimes afraid that God will, perhaps, never permit me to enjoy the blessing: still, however, I continue my preparations. But is it not barbarous, after all, to consider the death of a person, so dear to me, as the beginning of a journey I wish so ardently? What think you of worldly arrangements? I must own, I am astonished at them: we should profit by those that are displeasing to us, and make use of them as so many penances. Now I am mentioning penances, M. de Coulanges says such strange things of those which are practised at Aix, that I think the people must be mad; and I hardly know how to give credit to his account. [3]

Madame de Coulanges has been at St.-Germain and has brought me back a thousand strange stories, that cannot be committed to writing, which make me join in

[1] After the death of the Chevalier de Grignan, which happened the 6th of February, 1672, M. d'Adhémar took the title of Chevalier de Grignan: but afterwards, upon marrying the youngest daughter of the late Marquis of Oraison, of the house of Aqua, he resumed that of Comte Adhémar.

[2] Le petit dénaturé.

[3] The societies of penitents at Aix were wont to have certain processions, which lasted the whole night between Holy Thursday and Good-Friday; but they have been discontinued for some time on account of the indecencies that took place.

your opinion, upon the horror of infidelity: that part of your letter was very instructive and sensible; but you see everybody is not of your way of thinking. Surely, my dear child, you must be in a great rage when your china is not worthy of being sacrificed to your fury, but you must break iron itself. I am really sorry for you when I think that you had nobody by to laugh at you; for in my opinion such a humour kept to one's self, is worse than the small-pox. But how are you off for that now? Is your little one quite safe?

Our Cardinal has said a thousand kind things of you this evening; he is going to St. Denis [1], to assist at the Easter ceremony; he will return for a short time, and then adieu. Madame de La Fayette goes to-morrow to a cottage she has near Meudon, where she has been before: she intends to pass a fortnight there, suspended as it were between heaven and earth, and is resolved neither to think, nor speak, nor answer, nor hear: she is quite wearied with saying good-night and good-morning, and has almost every day a slight attack of fever, which a little rest carries off; therefore it is very necessary she should have it: I intend to go to see her. Poor M. de La Rochefoucauld is in the old chair you know so well, moped to death: it will not be difficult for you to guess what ails him. I have heard no news to-day. The music at St.-Germain is quite divine, which is more than I can say of the singing at the Minimes. I was there not long ago, and my little girl with me, who met with a great many of her acquaintance. I love that child too well; but I cannot exactly measure all sort of things: *I had the honour of being your father's servant*; and is not that a sufficient excuse for loving in the same way?

If I do not mention Madame de La Troche to you so frequently as I used to do, it is, that the waves of the sea are not more uncertain than she is in her conduct towards me; she is pleased and displeased ten times in a week. This fickleness of temper makes her company very

[1] Cardinal de Retz was Abbé of St. Denis.

disagreeable. The preference I give to the Faubourg is a point I cannot easily give up: I know myself as much beloved by all there as it is possible to be: I can never come unseasonably; they are of the right stamp; there is nothing contraband; what you see once, you see always: besides, our Cardinal frequently meets me there; and what can I do after all this? In a word, I give up the task of pleasing Madame de La Troche, without giving up my regard for her; she will always find me the same, whenever she is disposed to do herself justice: I have many good witnesses of my conduct, with respect to her, who all think me right, and sometimes even wonder at my patience. Be sure you do not answer a word to all this; for if she should take it in her head to see one of your letters, and should find any token of disapprobation, all would be over with us. Indeed, she never has seen any of them yet; for there are few persons that I think worthy of seeing them: Madame de Villars is my favourite in that respect. If I were Queen of France or of Spain, I should think she was making her court to me; but as it is, I am sure it is from pure regard for you, that she interests herself so much in our correspondence. She is delighted with your remembrance of her: she will not set out so soon as was imagined, for a reason that you may guess, when I tell you, that she cannot go but at the expense of the King her master; and that besides this her assignments are retarded[1]: however, we declare now, that we have nothing to allege against the Spaniards, as they abide strictly by their treaties. Their Ambassador is here, filling our little Minimes with his fine liveries. My dear child, I am now going to prayers, in order to fit myself for to-morrow's solemnity: I must at least endeavour to preserve that act of my life as free as possible from the imperfections that attend the rest. I love and embrace you: I wish I could feel my heart as warm towards God as it is towards you.

[1] She was going to the Court of Madrid, where her husband was Ambassador Extraordinary.

LETTER 197

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, April 20, 1672.

You promise to send me some of the songs they make in Barbary: well, you will not have so much upon your conscience in communicating to me the little scandal that passes at Tunis and Algiers, as I have in furnishing you with all the ill-nature of this place. My dear child, when I reflect, that the Mediterranean is your nearest neighbour, I cannot help feeling my heart quite pained and afflicted. There are certain things in the world that fill us with dread; they teach us nothing new, indeed; but then we see them in a point of view that surprises us.

I saw your three Provençals yesterday; Spinola was one of them; he gave me your letter of the twenty-first of last month; I will do my best to serve him. I have a great respect for his name: there is a Spinola, who lost one of his hands in a romantic way: he was a second Artaban. Your Spinola showed me a letter in Italian, full of nothing but your praise; I send you a copy of it. I am highly delighted with the apostrophe to the King of France. He tells me that you speak Italian very well indeed; I commend you greatly for it; nothing can be prettier; had I been in a place where I could have had opportunities of speaking it, I should certainly have done so: do not grow tired of it.

I suppose M. d'Usèz has informed you of the conversation he had with the King; nothing could be more desirable than what then passed. The worthy prelate is going to leave us soon; his absence will be a great loss to your affairs here. Madame de Brissac makes no scruple now of receiving the Comte de Guiche at her house; they are scarcely to be seen anywhere else: she goes very seldom to M. de La Rochefoucauld's; and Madame de La Fayette is at her little country-house; so there is very little

intimacy between them and the Duchesse. I had mentioned Madame de La Troche to you, at the time you wrote to me about her: now you know the whole affair; however, as she cannot well live without me, she has broken the ice, and is all good humour again: I am very glad of it; for I take things just as they happen: if I had a little more warmth in my temper, I should sometimes be very angry with her. This is just the state you would have me be in, easy and unconcerned at all events: a happy state indeed. But, alas! I am far from enjoying its sweets. You even alarm me, when you seem to wish it. Methinks you are capable of doing whatever you will; and, perhaps, at a time when I feel the most lively tenderness for you, I may, on a sudden, find you quite calm and unmoved. Ah! let me perceive no apathy in you, when I come to Provence. I shall regret my journey, I assure you, if I meet with any of that icy tranquillity. I am now very near my departure; but, alas! my dismission will cost me many tears. My poor aunt is in a most deplorable condition: her swelling increases every day; and she has such racking pains as would rend the hardest heart. Madame de Coulanges took leave of her yesterday with tears in her eyes: though it was not a formal leave, yet, as both she and her husband imagine they shall never see her again, it was very painful to them both. As for me, I pass the most part of the day in sighing by her bedside. I am quite drowned in tears; the caresses and affectionate expressions she bestows on me go to my very soul: she speaks of her death as she would of a journey: she has always had good spirits, and she keeps them up still. This morning she received the sacrament, as her passport and Easter-offering, and hopes to receive it once more. Her devotion was amazing; we all melted into tears to see her: she was in her chair, for she could not bear the bed: but she afterwards fell upon her knees; and was then the most mournful and affecting spectacle of piety that can be imagined.

I felt real sorrow at parting with M. and Madame de Coulanges; they have both a very great friendship for

me; I expect to meet them again at Lyons. I am going to settle my little household, in hopes of seeing you once more there. It is said that La Brune (Madame de Coëtquen) has resumed the thread of her story with the Chevalier de Lorraine, and that they talked very much of the fête given by the Duc, and of their waiting so scrupulously till the clock struck twelve on Palm-Sunday before they would eat meat. Everyone's time now is employed in taking leave of his friends: everybody is in a hurry; everybody is setting out. The Comtesse du Lude is come hither post to take leave of her husband; she goes back again in a week, after she has held his stirrup, and sent him off to the army with the rest. All here tremble for their friends.

I passed my Palm-Sunday at Sainte-Marie's, in my usual way. Barillon has made a long stay here; but he is going away at last, as you have ordered him to attend his duty. Your example leaves him not a word to say: he will have a fine place of it; it will cost him at least fifty thousand francs for his table; but he knows where to get them [1]. Madame de C. . . . is certainly mad; at least we think so here. What a whim, to wander about Italy like an unfortunate Princess, when she might return home and live sociably with her mother, who adores her, and whose greatest affliction is the foolish conduct of her daughter! and reason enough she has to be afflicted, for in my life I never met with anything so ridiculous. We do not know whether La Marans is employed above or below ground; she seldom sees her son [2], or Madame de La Fayette, and then stays but for a moment, and away again with Madame de Schomberg, who comes to take her up; it is very vexatious not to be carried back by Madame de Sévigné: she does not at all like to meet me.

Is your little boy really become brown? I thought you said he was fair; to me you always boasted of him as such: but, seriously, is he brown? Do you not jest with

[1] M. Barillon was Ambassador to the English Court.

[2] M. de La Rochefoucauld.

me? I have a great mind to tell you, that your girl is fair; but be it as it will, all your children carry the mark of the workman about them.

The little Du Bois [1] is gone to attend M. de Louvois [2], and I begin already to feel his absence. I went yesterday to the post-office to endeavour to make friends there, or see if Du Bois had not recommended me to somebody; but they were all new faces, and did not seem to think me of any great consequence. I begged of them to let my letters be put by themselves, and I would send in the morning, which I did not fail to do; but they sent me word that there were none for me. I am fallen from the clouds! I cannot live without a letter from you: perhaps, you may have directed them under cover to somebody in the neighbourhood, and they will be sent me to-morrow. I wish it may be so, and that I may be able to place our correspondence, as to post, upon the same footing as before.

LETTER 198

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, April 22, 1672.

I received your letter of the thirteenth instant, precisely when it was too late to answer it; for notwithstanding all the care I had taken about the post, it had been left to the carelessness of the clerks, which was just what I apprehended. I shall use all my endeavours to make some new friend at the post-office; but, in fact, I had much rather be off, if my poor aunt would decide. It is cruel to say this; but it is no less cruel to find duty thus bar my way, when I was ready to come to you. My present situation is far from being agreeable.

[1] The postmaster whom Madame de Sévigné had engaged in her interest to facilitate the correspondence between her daughter and herself.

[2] Postmaster-General and Secretary of War.

I am very impatient to know what passed in your journey to St. Baume [1]: it is your *Nôtre Dames des Anges.* The Marquis de Vence, who is extremely obliging and civil to me, has given me a frightful description of the way to it. He has lost his eldest son lately: I really pity the poor man; for very often the tears would start from his eyes, if he did not struggle with himself to repress them: he appears to be very warm in your interests.

I have been with the Cardinal to see Madame de La Fayette: we found her better than she was in Paris. We had a great deal of conversation about you. He is to leave us next Monday, and will bid you adieu as he bid you welcome. He loves you sincerely; and you may be sure of his answer to the proposal concerning his being Archbishop of Aix. We were laying down the life he would lead, divided between the desire of seeing you, and the fear of making himself ridiculous: we regulated the hours, and fixed the punishments for the first who should presume to make any remarks upon his attachment to you. This conversation had like to have carried us beyond Fleuri [2]. D'Hacqueville, and the Abbé Pontcarré, were with us, and I was in great state with these three men.

I am going to take a walk for three or four hours at Livry: I am very melancholy, and cannot give vent to my sadness here: I will try what the verdure of the spring, and the music of the nightingales, can do towards restoring the tranquillity of my mind. There is nothing to be seen here, but persons taking leave of one another, and there is no passing in the streets for wagons and equipages. I shall return here to-morrow to send off my son's; but that I shall do with very little trouble, for they are only chests that can be taken by porters. He bought all his horses in Germany: I shall take care to supply him

[1] Sainte-Baume is a large grotto cut out of the solid rock, where, by tradition of the country, but without any reasonable foundation, it is said, that St. Mary Magdalen retired, to finish her days in penitence and mortification.

[2] The name of the country-seat where Madame de La Fayette was at that time.

with money during the campaign. Yesterday I took my leave of the *little unnatural* [1]: I could hardly forbear weeping. This campaign will be a warm one, and I have no great dependence on his care of himself. *Poco duri pur che s'innalzi* [2], must be his device after all. Adieu, my dear, I shall say no more to you at present. I am going to St. Baume; that is, I am going to a place where I shall do nothing but think of you, and, perhaps, too affectionately. It will be very difficult for me to behold the gardens, the walks, the little bridge, the avenue, the field, the mill, the prospect, the wood, etc., without thinking of my beloved child.

Little Daquin is appointed first physician to the King: so you see that favour can do as much as merit [3].

*LETTER 199

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, April 24, 1672.

You must know I did not receive your letter of the nineteenth of March, which you sent by the honest tradesman who gives long credit and seldom duns, till yesterday. Would to God we could find tradesmen of the same description here! but these sort of folks have become sad plagues for a long time. Everybody knows that what I say is true. We are all in despair; we have no pennies in our purses, and we have no means of borrowing; our tenants do not pay, and we dare not coin, because we do not wish to be sent to the devil; yet all the world is going

[1] The Chevalier de Grignan.

[2] Though short my duration, let me rise. [Translation.]

[3] Valot, who preceded Daquin, and who was a still worse physician, obtained his place by means of a gift of fifty thousand crowns to Cardinal Mazarin. It was this Valot whom Guy Patin named *Gargantua,* because he killed a rich financier of the name of Gargan. He was also very near killing Louis XIV. in 1658. Never were there so many ignorant physicians as at that period, and particularly for those who were called the great world.

to the army with an equipage. It is not easy to tell you how this is contrived. The miracle of the loaves and fishes is no longer a wonder. I think you are happy in your misfortune, in being exempt from joining the army. I should be grieved, if the only favour you had obtained for so long a period was that of standing the chance of being killed. It is enough that the King knows your good intentions. When he wants you, he knows where to find you; and as nothing escapes his memory, he will not perhaps forget the services you have rendered him. In the meantime, enjoy the pleasure of being the only man of your rank who can boast of having bread to eat.

I believe I have before given you my opinion of some of your letters to the King: they delight me. I saw a young man at the college of Clermont, who was worthy of being your son. I made him a short visit, and I intend some day to invite him to dinner. I supped the other evening with Manicamp and his sister, the Maréchale d'Estrées. She told me she should go to the college to see our Rabutin. We talked a good deal about you. As for Manicamp and myself, whenever we meet, we do not fail to introduce you in some way or other; we regret you, think no one equal to you, and each repeats to the other some witticism of yours: in short, you ought to be very much pleased with us. I do not know whether you have heard that the Maréchals d'Humières and de Bellefonds are exiled, for having refused to obey M. de Turenne when the armies shall have joined.

LETTER 200

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, April 27, 1672.

I shall answer your two letters, and then give you some news from here. Monsieur de Pomponne saw the first letter, and I intend to show him the greater part of

the second; he is gone: it was in taking leave of him before his departure, that I showed it him; for it was impossible to say anything better, than what you wrote concerning your affairs: he admires you extremely. I dare not tell you to what he compares your style: he was charmed with your description of Sainte-Baume; and will, I am sure, be much more so with your second letter. The Bishop [1] takes every opportunity of expressing his desire to be reconciled to you: as he finds matters in such a train here, as to make such a reconciliation his interest, he is willing to do himself the credit of an inclination so suitable to his character and profession. It is thought, that in a few days there will be a first President appointed for you [2]. I am extremely obliged to you for your lively description of Sainte-Baume, but it will not in the least diminish my desire of seeing that hideous grotto. The greater the difficulty in getting to it, the greater will be my inclination to go; but after all, I do not much care about it, for you are the only thing I seek in Provence: when I have you, I shall be in possession of all I wish for. My poor aunt continues extremely ill: I say a thousand kind things to her in your name, which she receives with pleasure. M. de La Trousse writes her the finest things imaginable; I have no idea of these professions to the dying. If love for me were to begin at such a time, I had as lief be without it. We should show our love during life, and endeavour, as you, my dear child, know so well how to do, to make it pleasant and happy, instead of heaping on those who love us sorrow and vexation; it is rather too late to change when our friends are dying. You know how I have always laughed at what is called being good-hearted at bottom: I know but one sort of good-heartedness; it is yours, and is sufficient to satisfy the most scrupulous.

I shall send Madame de Coulanges that part of my

[1] The Bishop of Marseilles, between whom and the Grignan family there had been a dispute.

[2] For Provence, vacant by the death of Monsieur d'Opéde.

letter which belongs to her; that dear letter must be cut into a thousand pieces; however, I shall have a few hundreds to my own share to comfort myself with: all dear, all charming as these letters are, shall I tell you, my lovely child, that I heartily wish to receive no more of them? But now for news.

The King sets out to-morrow: there will be a hundred thousand men the less in Paris, according to the best calculations, from the different quarters of the city: for the last four days, I have done nothing but take leave. I was yesterday at the Citadel, to bid adieu to the grand-master [1], but I did not find him there: however, I found La Troche there weeping for her son, and the Comtesse [2] weeping for her husband: she had a grey hat on, in which, in the excess of her grief, she buried her face: it was an odd sight. I believe there are very few instances of hats being seen on such occasions; I think I would for once, at least, have put on a cap or a hood. They both set out this morning, the wife to the family-seat, and the husband to the war: good heavens, what a war! it is likely to be the most sanguinary and fatal one that has taken place since the passage of Charles VIII. into Italy; and so the King has been told.

The Issel [3] is defended with twelve hundred pieces of cannon, and sixty thousand infantry, besides three towns, and a large river, on this side of it. The Comte de Guiche, who knows the country, showed us a map of it at Madame de Verneuil's; it is an astonishing enterprise; the Prince de Condé is very much occupied with it. The other day a pleasant sort of a fellow came to him to say he knew a secret to furnish him with money. "My friend," said he, "I thank thee; but if thou hast any invention by which

[1] The Comte du Lude, grand-master of the ordnance.

[2] Renée-Eléonore de Bouillé, first wife of the Comte du Lude, was a great huntress, and dressed on those occasions like a man: she spent the greater part of her life in the country, following the diversions of the field.

[3] According to the Dutch pronunciation, the Scheldt.

we may pass the Issel without being knocked on the head, thou wilt much oblige me by communicating it, for I know of none." His Lieutenants-General were the Maréchals d'Humières and de Bellefonds, of whom I have some particulars to give, which you ought to be informed of. The two armies are to join; the King will command Monsieur [1] Monsieur the Prince [2], the Prince M. de Turenne, and de Turenne the two Maréchals, and even the army of M. de Créqui. The King mentioned this to the Maréchal de Bellefonds, and told him, that it was his will he should obey M. de Turenne, without considering his rank. The Maréchal without taking time to reflect on it, (this was his fault) replied, that he should not be worthy of the honour His Majesty had conferred on him, if he disgraced himself by an obedience that had no example. The King, with much good nature, desired him to retract the answer he had made; and told him that he wished it from a feeling of friendship, as his disgrace would be the consequence of his refusal. The Maréchal replied, that he saw he should lose the happiness of His Majesty's favour, and ruin his own fortune; but this appeared to him more eligible, than to forfeit his esteem; and that he could not obey M. de Turenne, without dishonouring the dignity to which he had raised him. "Then," said the King, "we must part:" the Maréchal made a very low bow, and took his leave. M. de Louvois, who does not love him, immediately sent him an order to go to Tours. His name is erased out of the list of the King's household: he is in debt fifty thousand crowns more than all his estate is worth: he is utterly ruined; but he is contented. It is believed he will retire to La Trappe. He offered his equipage, which was made at the King's expense, to His Majesty, to be disposed of as he pleased. This was interpreted as a design to affront the King, though nothing could be more innocent. His friends and relations, and all who have any attachment to him, are inconsolable: Ma-

[1] The Duc d'Orléans, the King's brother.

[2] The Prince de Condé.

dame de Villars [1] is so likewise. Do not fail to write to her, and to the poor Maréchal. The Maréchal d'Humières, who was supported by M. de Louvois, had not appeared at Court since, and waited till the Maréchal de Créqui had given his answer. He came post from the army to give it himself: he arrived yesterday, and had a conversation of an hour with the King. The Maréchal de Gramont was called in, who maintained the rights of the Maréchals of France, and desired the King to judge who did the greatest honour to that dignity; they who, to support his grandeur, exposed themselves to the danger of disobliging His Majesty; or he who was ashamed to bear that title, who had effaced it out of every place where it was found, who esteemed the name of Maréchal as an injury to him, and who affected to command in quality of a Prince. The end of all this is, that the Maréchal de Créqui is gone to his country-house to plant cabbages, as well as Maréchal d'Humières.

This is at present the only subject of conversation. It is much disputed whether they did well or ill: their partisans on both sides are warm in the debate. The Comtesse [2] has talked herself into a sore throat, and the Comte de Guiche is so hoarse he cannot speak: the debate between them grew into a perfect comedy; it was necessary to separate them. The truth is, these are three men of great importance in carrying on the war, and it will be difficult to supply their places. The Prince is very much concerned at losing them, thinking the King's interest must suffer by it. M. de Schomberg, having commanded armies in chief, is likewise unwilling to obey M. de Turenne. In a word, France, though it abounds so much in great Generals, will scarcely find one who will accept of employment in consequence of this unhappy misunderstanding.

M. d'Aligre has the seals; he is fourscore years of

[1] She was a Bellefonds, and was aunt of the Maréchal.

[2] Madame de Fiesque, who always went by the name of *the Comtesse.*

age; they are only deposited with him. He is chosen, like a Pope, merely with a view to a quick succession.

I have just been making the tour of the city. I have been with M. de La Rochefoucauld; he is oppressed with grief upon taking leave of his sons: but in the midst of this concern, he begs me to say a thousand tender things to you from him. We have had much conversation on this melancholy occasion. All the world is in tears, for their sons, their brothers, their husbands, or their lovers. He must be of a miserably selfish temper who is not deeply interested in the departure, as it were, of the whole kingdom. Dangeau and the Comte de Sault [1] came to bid us adieu. They informed us, that the King, instead of setting out to-morrow, as it was believed he would, in order to prevent the effusion of tears, went this morning at ten, without letting his intention be known. He had a suite of twelve only with him; the rest will follow. Instead of going to Villers-Cotterets, he is gone to Nanteuil, where it is thought that others who have disappeared of late [2] will meet him. To-morrow he is to go to Soissons, and afterwards will pursue the route that was first resolved on. If you do not think this gallant, you have only to say so. The universal melancholy that reigns there, is beyond imagination. The Queen remains in quality of Regent: all the principal companies have been to pay their compliments to her. This is a strange war, and begins dismally.

On my return hither, I found our good Cardinal, who came to bid me adieu: we talked an hour together; he has written you a little valedictory epistle, and he sets out to-morrow. M. d'Usèz is going away too: who is it that is not leaving Paris? alas! it is I only; but I shall have my turn as well as others. I approve your Monaco excursion. It is true, as you say, that it is a cruel thing to take a journey of two hundred leagues, and at the end of it to find oneself at Aix: but this jaunt will suit the

[1] Afterwards Duc de Lesdiguières.

[2] The Duchesse de La Vallière.

delay of my own journey. I shall arrive perhaps at Grignan nearly as soon as you.

I beg, my dearest child, that you will let me hear from you regularly. I am like a lost creature without your letters.

LETTER 201

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, April 29, 1672.

Monsieur d'Usèz went this morning; I took my leave of him with the concern that is natural on losing a person so useful and friendly as he has been in your affairs; I am sensible of his merit, and love and honour him exceedingly. I hope for the pleasure of seeing him again in Provence: you ought in all things implicitly to follow his advice; he knows how matters go here, and will on every proper occasion stand up for the honour of M. de Grignan. I have written to M. de Pomponne, and did not fail to enclose two sides of your letter; nothing can be added to what you have said. Had I attempted to copy it, I know I should have heightened some expressions, or rather indeed have lowered them, which would have robbed them of half their strength: I have seconded your letter by one of my own, wherein I desire him to observe the turn they have given to this business, and in what a fawning artful manner they strive to cloak their insatiable desire of crossing M. de Grignan in all his undertakings. I am sure this will have a favourable effect on M. de Pomponne, for it is directly contrary to the proceedings of honest and upright men. When I lay hold of a circumstance of this nature, I know very well how to place it in its proper light, and make it properly estimated: I expect his answer with impatience.

Our Cardinal set off yesterday. There is not now a single man of quality in Paris: they are all gone with

the King, or to their respective governments, or else into the country; of the latter, however, there are but few. I think M. de S*** [1] has much greater courage than those who are to pass the Issel: he, though young, rich, and in full health, has been able to see every man of merit and fortune join the army, with as much indifference about following them, as if they had been going on a party to pick shells; I did not say a hunting-party, for then he would infallibly have followed them: he is going very peaceably down to S...., *tayau,* where he will remain during the summer: he is infinitely wiser than the rest, who blindly follow opinion, *la regina del monde.* It is certainly better to be a philosopher, and pass one's life in ease and tranquillity, than to be exposed to perpetual dangers, and lead a life of toil and hazard for a mere phantom: thus judiciously argues M. de S***.

Everybody is sad and out of spirits; not a day passes without seeing some or other of one's relations going to expose themselves to the most imminent danger. This is a heart-breaking reflection. The King himself was not exempt from this weakness, in this sudden departure. It is positively asserted, that he was received by some certain persons at Nanteuil, who are not to return very speedily to Saint-Germain, on account of a little business they have to transact two or three months hence, which will be best done at a country-house [2].

The King is much less incensed against M. de Créqui than against the two others; because he gave his reasons in a very proper manner. Maréchal Bellefonds answered too dryly, too cavalierly. We should not forget what is necessary on such occasions.

You are now on your journey, my dear; you cannot do anything better at present; we are not always in a situation, or in a humour, to travel. If you were less ad-

[1] By the Letter 207, of the 16th of May following, it is plain that M. de Sully is the person alluded to.

[2] Madame de Montespan, who was near her confinement, is probably alluded to here.

venturous, I should be happier; but you love to attempt uncommon exploits, and go where wheel has never passed before; this gives me uneasiness. Take my advice, my child, and do not force nature; but ride on horseback, or be carried in a litter, like other people. Consider what it is to have an arm, leg, or neck, broken. Write to me as often as you can, especially from Monaco.

I am on very good terms with the Comte de Guiche. I have seen him several times at M. de La Rochefoucauld's, and at the Sully Mansion: he always attacks me; he fancies I have wit; we have chatted and jested a good deal with one another. He has told me how dreadfully his sister [1] has been maimed by having been bled unskillfully, and the account has excited my compassion and alarm. I have never seen him with his *Chimène* [2]; they are personages so exactly formed upon the model of an old romance, that no one suspects them of indelicacy in their passion, and it is thought they have good reasons to observe inviolably the laws of honour.

It is two months since La Marans has seen her *son* [3]; he has no very high opinion of her. Shall I tell you what she said the other day? Her sayings, you know, are often extraordinary. She declared that for her part, she had rather die than grant favours to a man she loved; but if she found a man that loved her, and who was not perfectly disagreeable, and that she was entirely free from passion for him, she might perhaps prevail with herself to venture on a little compliance. Her *son* preserves in his memory this virtuous resolution of hers, and makes it an infallible rule, by which to judge of her intrigues. He told her he approved of this distinction the more, because it was delicate and new; he had before conversed only with women of such gross minds, that they could not discern the one

[1] Madame de Monaco.

[2] Madame de Brissac.

[3] Monsieur de La Rochefoucauld is the person always meant in these letters by the son of Madame de Marans, that lady always calling him *son*, and he styling her *mother*.

from the other, but always confounded the man that was loved, with him that was favoured: but that it was agreeable to her nicer taste, to reform these old maxims, which were not to be compared with the refined sentiments she endeavoured to introduce. It is pleasant to hear his reflections on this subject. Since he has had this key to his *mother's* behaviour, he has lost sight of her, but he draws his own consequences without any difficulty.

Friday night.

I saw Madame du Plessis-Bellière two hours ago; she related to me the conversation between the King and the Maréchal de Créqui [1]. It was long, earnest, affecting, and rational. If he had been the first to speak, the affair would doubtless have terminated happily; he proposed five or six expedients which might have been received, had not the King made it a law to himself not to yield to any accommodation. The Maréchal de Bellefonds has spoiled all. M. de La Rochefoucauld says, it is because he is unyielding, and that his mind does not easily dove-tail itself with the sentiments of others. The Maréchal de Créqui said to the King in despair, "Sire, take from me the Maréchal's staff; that may be done at your pleasure: let me serve this campaign simply as Marquis de Créqui; perhaps I may deserve to have it restored to me again at the end of the war." The King was affected at the situation in which he saw him, and as he went out of the room, in an agony of grief, scarcely knowing any one he met, he said to the Maréchal de Villeroi, "Follow the Maréchal de Créqui; he is almost beside himself." He spoke of him with esteem, and without resentment, and has made his company of guards serve in the army. The Maréchal has gone to his house at Marines near Pontoise, with his wife and children. The Maréchal d'Humières has gone to Angers. This, my dear child, has been the

[1] The Maréchal de Créqui was son-in-law of Madame du Plessis-Bellière.

only subject of conversation here for these four days. There is not a soul of any fashion left in Paris.

Voici votre tour,
Venez, Messieurs de la ville,
Parlez-nous d'amour;
Mais jusqu'à leur retour [1].

My aunt is somewhat better than she was; so that we are resolved to set out about the middle or end of May. In the meantime, I shall carefully inform you of every thing that passes. Adieu, my dearest child, I am yours without reserve or limitation.

LETTER 202

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, May 4, 1672.

It is impossible, my dear child, to tell you how much I pity, how much I praise, and how much I admire you: thus I divide my discourse into three heads. First, *I pity you* in being so subject to the vapours and low spirits, as they will certainly do you much harm. Secondly, *I praise you* for subduing them when there is occasion, especially on M. de Grignan's account, whom they must make very uneasy; it is a pleasing proof of the regard and consideration you have for him. Thirdly, and lastly, *I admire you* for suppressing your natural inclination, to appear what you are not: this is really heroic, and the fruit of your philosophy: you have ample matter in yourself to call it into exercise. We were saying the other day, that there is no real evil in life, except great pain; all the rest is merely imaginary, and depends on the light in which we view things. All other evils are curable either by time,

[1] Now, now is your time, come, each smart powder'd cit,
And make your approaches, and sigh at our feet:
We permit you to tell with what passion you burn;
But, hark ye! 'tis only till they can return.
[Translation.]

moderation in our wishes, or strength of mind; and may be lightened by reflection, religion, or philosophy. But pain tyrannises over both soul and body. Confidence in God may indeed enable us to bear it with patience, and turn it to our advantage, but it will not diminish it.

This seems to savour of the Faubourg Saint-Germain [1], but it comes from my poor aunt's apartment, where I was the leader of the conversation. The subject arose naturally from her extreme sufferings, which, she maintains, are infinitely superior to every evil that life is subject to. M. de La Rochefoucauld is of the same opinion: he is still tormented with the gout; he has lost his true mother [2], and he lamented her death so tenderly and affectionately, that I almost adored him: she was a woman of extraordinary merit, and was the only person in the world, he said, who was unchangeable in her love for him. Fail not to write to him, both you and M. de Grignan. M. de La Rochefoucauld's affection for his family is unparalleled: he maintains that it is one of the chains that attach us to one another. We have discovered, and related, and reconciled, many things relative to his foolish mother (*Madame de Marans*), which explain to us clearly what you once said, that it was not what we thought, but quite another thing: yes truly it was quite another thing, or perhaps better still, it was this and that too; one was without prejudice to the other: she wedded the lute to the voice, and spiritual things to coarseness and indelicacy. My child, we have found a good vein, and one which explains the mystery of a quarrel you once had in the council-chamber of Madame de La Fayette: I will tell you the rest in Provence.

My aunt is in a state which does not seem likely to terminate. Your journey is exceedingly well-timed, perhaps ours may tally with it. We have a great desire to

[1] That is, from Madame de La Fayette's, at whose house M. de La Rochefoucauld, and some of the most select company in Paris, used to meet.

[2] Gabrielle du Plessis Liancourt.

pass some part of our Whitsuntide on the road, either at Moulins or at Lyons. The Abbé wishes it no less than myself. There is not a man of quality (of the sword I mean) in Paris. I went on Sunday to hear mass at the Minimes. "We shall find our poor Minimes quite deserted," said I to Mademoiselle de La Trousse, "we shall not find a creature there, except the Marquis d'Alluye [1]." Well, we went into the church, where the first and only creature we saw was the Marquis d'Alluye: I could not help laughing till I fairly cried at the oddity of the thing; in short, he is left behind, and is going to his government on the sea-coast. The coast must be guarded, you know.

The lover of her whom you style *the incomparable* [2], did not meet her at the first stage, but on the road, in a house of Sanguin's, a little beyond that which you know: he remained there two hours, it is thought he then saw the children for the first time. The fair one stays there attended by a guard, and a female friend; she is to be there for four or five months. Madame de La Vallière is at St.-Germain: Madame de Thianges is here with her father; I saw her daughter the other day, she is beautiful beyond all imagination. Some people pretend that the King went straight to Nanteuil, but it is certain that the fair one is at the house called Genitoi. I tell you nothing but the truth; there is nothing I have a greater aversion and contempt for than idle stories.

You have taken your departure then, my dear; well, I will live in the hope of hearing from you at every stage. I shall not be behindhand on my side. I have managed so well as to find a friend at the post-office, who is very careful of our letters. I have for these several days past been occupied in adorning my cottage; Saint Aubin has effected wonders. I shall sleep there to-morrow. I swear to you that the reason I like it so well, is because it is intended for you. You will be very well accommodated

[1] Paul d'Escloubleau, Marquis d'Alluye and de Sourdis, Governor of the city and country of Orléans, and of the Pays Chartrain.

[2] The King and Madame de Montespan.

in my apartment, and I shall not be less so. I will tell you how charmingly everything is contrived. I am extremely uneasy about your poor brother; this terrible war makes us tremble for those we love: whenever I think of it, it fills me with horror; but then again, I comfort myself with the thought that it may not be so bad as I apprehend, for I have remarked that things seldom happen as we expect them to do.

Pray let me know what has happened between the Princesse d'Harcourt and you [1]. Brancas is dreadfully chagrined that you do not love his daughter. M. d'Usèz has promised to re-establish peace between all parties: I should be glad to know what has occasioned the coolness between you.

You tell me of your son, that his beauty grows less, and his merit increases; I am sorry for the loss of his beauty, and I am rejoiced to find that he loves wine; this is a little spice of Brittany and Burgundy together, which will produce a charming effect with the prudence of the Grignans. As for your daughter, she is quite the reverse; her beauty increases, and her merit lessens. I assure you, she is very pretty, but as obstinate as a demon; she has her little wills, and little designs of her own; she diverts us extremely; she has a beautiful complexion, blue eyes, black hair, a nose neither handsome nor ugly; her chin, her cheeks, and the turn of her face, are faultless. I shall say nothing of her mouth, it will do very well. She has a very sweet voice: Madame de Coulanges thinks it suits her mouth admirably.

I fancy, my dear child, that I shall at last be a convert to your opinion. I meet with vexations in life that are insupportable, and find, notwithstanding my fine reasoning at the beginning of this letter, there are many evils which, though less severe than bodily pain, are nevertheless equally to be dreaded. I meet with such frequent

[1] Françoise de Brancas, wife of Alphonse Henri Charles, of Lorraine, Prince d'Harcourt; and daughter of Charles de Brancas, Gentleman of Honour to Queen Anne of Austria.

disappointments, that I think with you, that life is very disobliging.

When the Chevalier de Lorraine went away, he was making love to *the Angel* [1], and Monsieur seemed to approve of it. Madame de Coëtquen [2] has not been able, they say, to resume the thread of her discourse: Madame de Rohan has resigned; she, and her whole family, are lodged at the Vitri Mansion. I expect letters from M. de Pomponne: we, that is, you, have no first President yet.

LETTER 203

From Madame de Sévigné *to Madame* de Grignan.

Paris, Friday, May 6, 1672.

My dear child, I must return to narration, it is a folly I can never resist. Prepare, therefore, for a description. I was yesterday at a service performed in honour of the Chancellor Séguier [3], at the Oratory. Painting, sculpture, music, rhetoric, in a word, the four liberal arts were at the expense of it. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the decorations: they were finely imagined, and designed by Le Brun. The mausoleum reached to the top of the dome, adorned with a thousand lamps, and a variety of figures characteristic of him in whose honour it was erected. Beneath were four figures of Death, bearing the marks of his several dignities, as having taken away his honours with his life. One of them held his helmet, another his ducal coronet, another the ensigns of his order, another his Chancellor's mace. The four sister arts, painting,

[1] Louise-Elisabeth Rouxel, daughter of Maréchal de Grancey.

[2] It is well known that she was his mistress at the time Turenne was making love to her; and that, having confided to her the secret of Madame's voyage to England, she told it to the Chevalier, who did not fail to tell Monsieur of it, and Monsieur immediately informed the King that he was acquainted with the circumstance. Louis XIV. disconcerted Turenne extremely, by informing him at the same time that his secret was betrayed, and his mistress unfaithful.

[3] Pierre Séguier, who died the 28th of January, 1672.

music, eloquence, and sculpture, were represented in deep distress, bewailing the loss of their protector. The first representation was supported by the four virtues, fortitude, temperance, justice, and religion. Above these, four angels, or genii, received the soul of the deceased, and seemed pruning their purple wings to bear their precious charge to heaven. The mausoleum was adorned with a variety of little seraphs, who supported an illuminated shrine, which was fixed to the top of the cupola. Nothing so magnificent or so well imagined was ever seen; it is Le Brun's masterpiece. The whole church was adorned with pictures, devices, and emblems, which all bore some relation to the life, or office, of the Chancellor; and some of his noblest actions were represented in painting. Madame de Verneuil [1] offered to purchase all this decoration at a great price; but it was unanimously resolved by those who had contributed to it, to adorn a gallery with it, and to consecrate it as an everlasting monument of their gratitude and magnificence. The assembly was grand and numerous, but without confusion. I sat next to Monsieur de Tulle [2], Madame Colbert and the Duke of Monmouth, who is as handsome as when we saw him at the Palais Royal. (Let me tell you in a parenthesis, that he is going to the army to join the King). A young father of the Oratory came to speak the funeral oration. I desired Monsieur de Tulle to bid him come down, and to mount the pulpit in his place; since nothing could sustain the beauty of the spectacle, and the excellence of the music, but the force of his eloquence. My child, this young man trembled when he began, and we all trembled for him. Our ears were at first struck with a provincial accent; he is of Marseilles, and is called Léné. But as he recovered from his confusion, he became so brilliant; established himself so well; gave so just a measure of praise

[1] Charlotte Séguier, his daughter, married, first to Maximilien de Béthune, Duc de Sully, and, second to Henri de Bourbon, Duc de Verneuil.

[2] Jules Mascaron, Bishop of Tulle, a celebrated preacher.

to the deceased; touched with so much address and delicacy all the passages in his life where delicacy was required; placed in so true a light all that was most worthy of admiration; employed all the charms of expression, all the masterly strokes of eloquence, with so much propriety and so much grace, that every one present, without exception, burst into applause, charmed with so perfect, so finished a performance. He is twenty-eight years of age, the intimate friend of M. de Tulle, who accompanied him when he left the assembly. We were for naming him the Chevalier Mascaron, and I think he will even surpass his friend. As for the music, it was fine beyond all description. Baptiste [1] exerted himself to the utmost, and was assisted by all the King's musicians. There was an addition made to that fine *Miserere*; and there was a *Libera,* which filled the eyes of the whole assembly with tears: I do not think the music in heaven could excel it. There were several prelates present. I desired Guitaud to look for the good Bishop of Marseilles, but we could not see him. I whispered him, that if it had been the funeral oration of any person living, to whom he might have made his court by it, he would not have failed to have been there. This little pleasantry made us laugh, in spite of the solemnity of the ceremony. My dear child, what a strange letter is this? I fancy I have almost lost my senses! What is this long account to you? To tell you the truth, I have satisfied my love of description.

The King is at Charleroi, and will make a pretty long stay there. There is no forage yet to be found, and his numerous train carries famine with it wherever he goes. They are embarrassed at the outset of the campaign. Guitaud showed your letter to me and the Abbé; the burthen of it is very obliging (*Envoyez moi ma mère* [2]). How amiable you are, my child! and how agreeably do you justify the unbounded affection I bear you! Alas! I think of nothing but my journey; leave the arrangement

[1] Lully.

[2] Send me my mother. [Translation.]

to me: I will conduct everything; and if my aunt continues to spin out the poor remains of life to any great length, I shall certainly set out; you are the only person in the world who could induce me to leave her in so pitiable a condition. I am every moment thinking of my departure, but have not courage to fix the day. To-day my journey is concluded on; to-morrow I am irresolute. What you say, my dear, is true; there are events in life, which are very disobliging. You beg me not to think of you in changing my house, and I beg you to believe that I think of nothing else; and that you are so dear to me, that you occupy my whole heart. I shall go to-morrow and sleep in that delightful apartment, where you may be accommodated without displacing me. Adieu, my beautiful love, you are at present a traveller, exposed to the wide world; I fear your adventurous disposition. I can neither trust to you, nor to M. de Grignan. It is, as you say, a strange thing to find one's self at Aix, after having gone two hundred leagues; and at St. Pilon [1], after having climbed so high. Your letters sometimes contain very pleasant passages, but sometimes sentences which escape you, as obscure as those of Tacitus. I stumbled upon this comparison, and it is a very just one. I embrace Grignan, and kiss his right cheek, beneath the little tufted mole.

LETTER 204

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, May 13, 1672.

It is certain, that the extreme beauty of Livry would be capable of giving joy to my heart, if I were not overwhelmed with grief at the melancholy situation in which I see my poor aunt, and with a perpetual desire of setting

[1] St. Pilon is a chapel in the form of a dome, built upon the point of the rock of Sainte-Baume. It is only to be attained with infinite labour, and by a road cut in the mountain.

out; joined to these, the illness of Madame de La Fayette distresses me. After having been in the country for upwards of a month, taking every necessary precaution, as she thought, against her disorder, and returning to all appearance as sound as a roach; she was attacked a day or two after her arrival, with an ague fit, attended with fever and delirium: this has reduced her to a worse extremity than ever, and cannot fail in the end to carry her off. But her disorder, violent as it is, does not shock me so much as my aunt's; it is that which distracts me, by being a continual obstacle to my darling object. But trust to me; leave me to myself. I shall not go to Provence for a long time, if I do not go this year; though you may be on the point of leaving it when I arrive, yet you must suffer me to see it; and if the presence of the Abbé can be of service to you in your affairs, take advantage of his kind offer: many things may be done in little time: pity our impatience, help us to bear it, and be assured we shall not lose a single moment in setting out, even though we may in some respects be deficient in courtesy. The multiplicity of my duties destroys me: what I do is too much for me, and whatever I omit vexes me. Spring, which used to give me new life, is no longer spring to me. *Alas! these fine days are not made for me,* is still the burden of my song. I just continue, however, to keep my soul in my body.

I can easily comprehend your desire to see Livry. I hope you will enjoy it in your turn. I suppose M. d'Usèz has told you that the King has made a law with himself to grant no indulgences of absence, but you may at least enjoy it, if it please God, during the life of the Abbé. I asked a person the other day, to describe to me what sort of spring yours is, and where your nightingales perch themselves to sing. I find there is nothing for them but rocks or frightful precipices of stone, or else orange-groves or olive-trees, and they do not like such bitter things: pray tell me something to retrieve the honour of your country.

I approve your journey highly. I am certain it must

be very amusing; the sound of the cannon has something in it that appears to accord with your grandeur and dignity: there is also something romantic in being received like a Princess wherever you go; indeed you want now and then a stranger or wandering Prince to grace your history; I fancy you have not many of those; however, this is a circumstance of no great importance. You must tell me who accompanies you in this little excursion. Monsieur de Martel [1] has written that he will receive you like a Queen of France. I cannot but admire the General of the galleys [2], and his curious passion; he will not be put to much difficulty to play the speechless and expiring lover; at least if he is as corpulent as you represent him, he may easily die of suffocation at his mistress's feet. It seems to me that you are on better terms together than you formerly were. At Marseilles, I understand, he is passionately in love with me.

Your letters are sent very regularly: you may write oftener without fearing to inconvenience me. If you were good, you would have told me the history of your uneasiness the other day: I have puzzled myself in vain to find out the cause. Your last letter makes me think you have enemies, but I cannot conceive who they can be. La Marans has other things to think of: you are at a distance from her, and cannot annoy her in any way. Besides, her sort of malice does not extend to things where care and application are necessary: you ought however to give me full information upon the subject. But, good God! what can they say of you? I cannot be uneasy at it, persuaded as I am, that falsehood soon dies. If you had chosen, my dear child, you could have informed me better than you have done.

Monsieur de Turenne is set out from Charleroi, at the head of twenty thousand men; his destination is a secret. My son is still in Germany. We shall now be in continual apprehension of hearing from the army. It is feared that

[1] Commander of the Marine at Toulon.

[2] Louis-Victor Rochehouart, Duc de Vivonne.

Commander Ruyter [1], who is the greatest naval commander in the world, has engaged and defeated Comte d'Estrées in the Channel. We know very little news here: it is said the King has forbidden any to be published: it is to be hoped, however, he will not conceal his victories from us.

La Troche, the Abbé Arnauld, and M. de Varennes, dined with me yesterday in my cottage, which I love, because it was built only for the pleasure of seeing you both there. Since I began this letter, I have seen Marseilles [2]; he appears as mild as a lamb; we did not engage in any controversy, but talked of the wonders that M. d'Usèz and I intended to perform, to bring about a lasting peace. I shall not easily support the return of Madame de Monaco, without bringing you with her; my good-natured disposition is not yet changed. I know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that La Marans dreads your return, as much as it is possible to dread anything: and that she will leave no stone unturned to raise an obstacle to it; she cannot stand your presence. If you will let me know a little more of the tricks that have been played you, I may perhaps be able to assist you in discovering the authors of them. You are greatly obliged to Langlade; he is no *writer* indeed, but he shows himself your friend on every occasion: he has spoken wonders to M. de Marseilles, and has puzzled him more than all the rest of your friends put together. M. d'Irval is gone to Lyons, from whence he is to set out for Venice: his equipage was in high taste, and extremely brilliant. He says of you, *tanto t'odiaro quanto t'amai* [3]; for he pretends that you have slighted him. Monsieur de Marsillac [4] says that they will set out on the tenth on a grand expedition: Monsieur de Turenne has marched forwards at the head of twenty thousand men.

[1] The Dutch Admiral.

[2] The Bishop of Marseilles.

[3] I shall hate thee as much as I have loved thee. [Translation.]

[4] Son of the Duc de La Rochefoucauld.

*LETTER 205

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, May 16, 1672.

I must be very much changed not to understand your jests, and all the fine passages in your letters. You well know, Comte, that we had formerly the gift of understanding one another before we had opened our lips. One answered very pertinently to what the other intended to say; and if we had not wished to give each other the pleasure of pronouncing words with facility, our penetration would have almost spared us the trouble of conversation. When an intelligence of this kind is established between two persons, they can never be dull. In my opinion, to comprehend quickly is a very happy talent: there is a vivacity in it that is agreeable to others, and which makes us in good humour with ourselves. M. de La Rochefoucauld says, truly, in his *Maxims,* "We love those better who comprehend us readily, than those who must listen to understand our meaning." By the same rule you and I ought to love one another the more for the intelligence that subsists between us. I beg you to speak of me to everyone who comes, and be careful to add some little traits, in your own style, to the eulogium the Marquise de St. Martin has made on me. Be alert, and place yourself between the two extremes, with as much skill as she has evinced volubility.

No news is stirring. The King marches with the army, but we know not where. His Majesty's designs are as secret as he could wish. An officer wrote the other day to a friend in town: "I beg you to inform me whether we are going to besiege Maëstricht, or to pass the Issel."

I assure you this campaign alarms me. Those who, from their misfortune rather than their inclination, are not in the army, are, in my opinion, the best off. One proof that the King is not tired of your letters is, that

he reads them: he would not do this if it were unpleasant to him. Adieu, Comte: I am glad you like mine: it is a proof you do not hate the writer.

Monsieur DE CORBINELLI *also writes to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *letter.*)

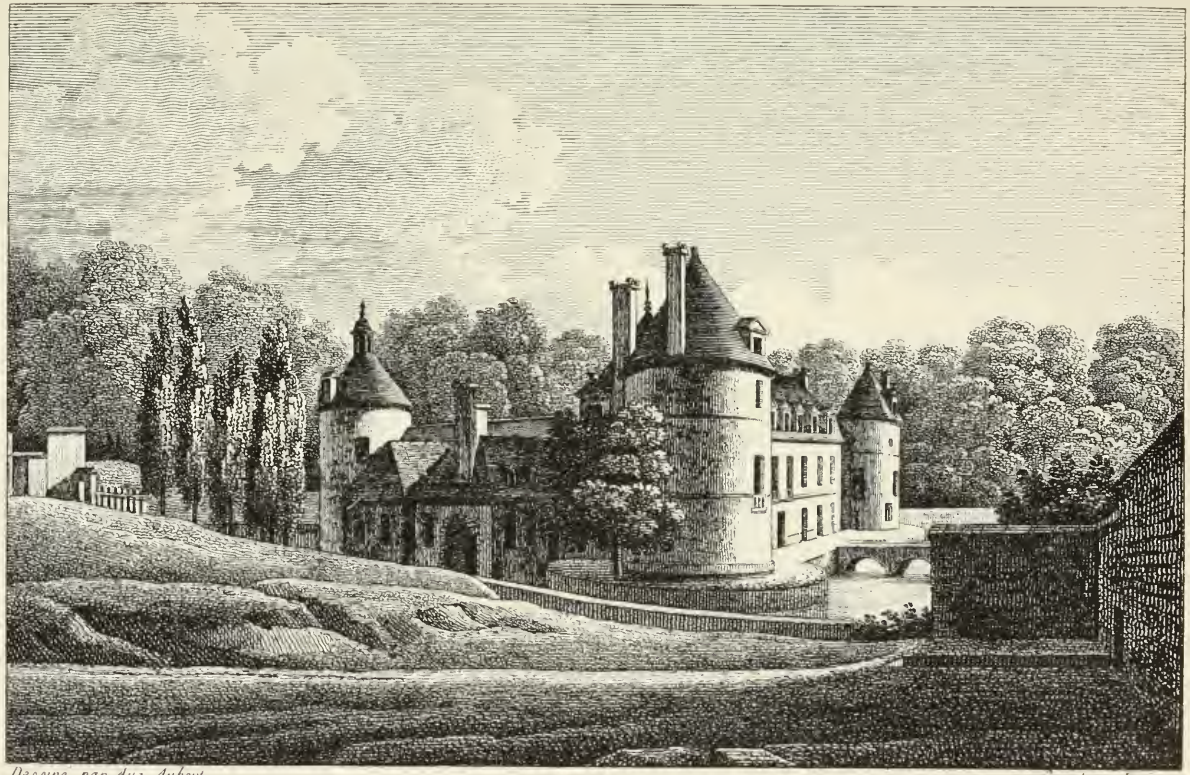
I have a great inclination, Sir, to take another trip into Burgundy. There are a thousand things upon which I long to converse with you; for my last visit was too short. I have not failed to profit by the passages you marked for me. My mind is still occupied with them, for in my opinion no one says such good things as yourself. You know I am no flatterer. Preserve the divine manner you possess, which shows the man of quality, and is pleasing in the highest degree; I mean of having more thoughts than words, and never using a word too much. I do not say this to have an opportunity of introducing the precept of Horace; for I can introduce a precept unseasonably, merely to show my learning, if the fancy takes me: you have long known me in this respect: to my mind you follow this rule of Horace's better than any one.

Horace speaks of a style of writing called *satire,* by which he means an agreeable discourse, and useful and pleasing reflections upon manners, whether good or bad: and he describes it thus. It is not enough, he says, to create a laugh; though that is a great point:

> Ergo non satis est risu diducere rictum
> Auditoris, et est quædam tamen hæec quoque virtus:

but we must also, both in writing and speaking, be concise, and avoid a superfluity of words, that our thoughts may be visible and striking, and not enveloped in a cloud of phraseology that obscures them:

> Est brevitate opus, ut currat sententia, neu se
> Impediat verbis lassas onerantibus aures.



Dessiné par Aug. Aubert *Gravé par Lorieux*

THE CHÂTEAU OF DE BUSSY, BURGUNDY.

Moreover, we must not always be grave and severe, nor always smooth and agreeable, in our discourse:

> Et sermone opus est modò tristi, sæpe jocoso.

Neither should we dwell too long on the proofs of what we would advance, like the orator, nor enter too freely into the blandishments of the poet, who thinks only of amusing, not of profiting, his hearers:

> Defendente vicem modò rhetoris atque poëtæ.

Sometimes even all this should be avoided, and nothing appear but the gentleman, who attends but little to rule or order, and never fails to please by his negligence; who never intrudes his thoughts, and often suppresses a thousand beautiful ideas which present themselves in crowds upon his subject, because he would not appear to be a man of superior understanding:

> —— Interdum. , parcentis viribus, atque
> Extenuantis eas consultò.

This, Sir, upon my faith and honour, is what you appear to me to observe better than any man I know. I say so continually to our literati. If I come to Bussy, I will read the Satires and Epistles of Horace with you, and you will agree that it is impossible he should ever be excelled. This is the character Persius gives him:

> Omne vafer vitium ridenti Flaccus amico
> Tangit, et admissus circum præcordia ludit.

Madame de Sévigné wishes me to undertake a panegyric of your epistles [1]. Indeed, Sir, Ovid himself ought to write it, in gratitude for the handsome dress in which you have clothed him.

[1] The translation of the Heroic Epistles of Paris to Helen, and Helen to Paris.

LETTER 206

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, May 16, 1672.

Your account of your journey, my sweet child, is admirable; I think I am reading some pretty romance, the heroine of which is extremely dear to me, and I take the most lively interest in all her adventures. I cannot but think that this excursion, in the most enchanting spot imaginable, surrounded with the choicest perfumes of nature, treated like a Queen wherever you went, must have been delightful: an incident in your life so novel and interesting, could not fail to please; and though your heart led you sometimes to wish for me, I am sure you were amused; and this thought gives me real satisfaction. If you have formed the same design this year that you did the last, to separate yourself still farther from me, you have succeeded better. For my own part, I have not taken the same steps: I intend to act very differently. Depend upon it, my dear, you will see me at Grignan this summer: leave it to me, and I will bring it to bear, I warrant you. It is great presumption, indeed, to answer thus confidently for one's actions; but as it is with a due deference to the will of Providence, we may surely be allowed the liberty of expressing our desires and intentions.

I shall make a point of seeing Madame de Martel: the polite reception her husband gave you, requires no less at my hands. I receive all your little billets with the greatest pleasure; they all bear marks of their author, which cannot fail of pleasing me. I frequently hear from my son; but, believe me, my heart is deeply afflicted at the thoughts of this war: his regiment is going to join the King's army.

It is thought we are going to besiege Maëstricht. This siege is a little less alarming than the passage of the Issel. We really tremble whenever we receive any

letters from the army; but it will be much worse a fortnight hence. M. de La Rochefoucauld and I mutually afflict and comfort each other. He has three or four sons there who are very dear to him.

Madame de Marans came yesterday to Madame de La Fayette's: she looked as gloomy as if she had entered into an agreement with Lucifer, and the day of its termination was approaching. She certainly is in profound grief for some warrior, who has left her without regret [1]. I should never make an end if I were to relate all the kind things that M. de La Rochefoucauld says of you; how much he delights in talking of you, and in making me read passages in your letters: he is a good creature. Madame de La Fayette desires me to tell you, that though she never enjoys her health, she is not at all the more reconciled to death, but rather the contrary. For my part, I own there are a great many disagreeables in the world; but yet I am not so far out of conceit with it, as your philosophy would enjoin: you will find it a hard matter, my dear child, to get this fanciful love of life out of your mother's head.

You will have heard news of M. de Coulanges from himself [2], that he has seen M. de Vivonne on his way, and that they pass their lives very tranquilly and pleasantly with the Marquis de Villeroi. My poor aunt continues very ill, and is a spectacle to pierce every heart. Our Abbé embraces you, La Mousse honours you, and both intend to see your Provence; for myself, I only desire to see you, and what is more, to see you, and see you for ever. Valcroissant has sent word that he had this honour at Marseilles, and that you were more beautiful than an angel; preserve this beauty till I come. Your daughter is very amiable; I think I shall bring her with me; but I shall take all necessary precautions not to run any risk with her: I will never believe that a mother does not love her daughter if she is handsome.

I have no news to tell you; my letters are very dull,

[1] Monsieur le Duc, afterwards Monsieur le Prince.

[2] Monsieur and Madame de Coulanges were at that time at Lyons.

compared with yours. I could not do better than send M. de Pomponne what you expressed so well upon the affair at Marseilles.

Your President de Boue visits me sometimes: he is an honest man, but I do not think it was he who invented gunpowder and printing. I do not know when you will have a first President; I believe few persons, except those of Provence, have much desire for the post. Madame de Coëtquen has had the measles. Madame de Sully is gone to Sully with her husband: Madame de Verneuil is at Rony with her's: Madame de Castelnau is with Madame de Louvigny; and the Maréchal's lady is by herself, like a turtle mourning her absent mate. D'Hacqueville is going into Brittany; if you want any more news apply to him, for we are so dull and languid, that life is quite insipid to us. It is thought that we have invested Maëstricht; but nothing is yet confirmed.

LETTER 207

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, May 20, 1672.

I can easily understand, my dear child, the pleasures, the magnificence, and the expense of your journey; I mentioned it to our Abbé as a serious affair. But those things are necessary: we should, however, examine whether we are willing to run the hazard of the abyss into which great expenses lead us. It is to little purpose to take care of ourselves, when we enter truly into the interests of persons who are dear to us, and feel all their sorrows, perhaps, more painfully than they do themselves; this is to destroy all the pleasures of life, and we must be mad still to cling to it. I may say the same of health; I have doubtless a great share of it, but it is of no other service

to me than to enable me to attend upon those who are sick: that treacherous fever has made another attack upon poor Madame de La Fayette, and my aunt grows worse and worse every day: when I leave her I go to La Fayette, and from her I return again to my aunt: neither Livry, nor its pleasing walks, nor my charming house, any longer amuse me; and yet I must run to Livry for a moment, for I can scarcely hold up my head. See how Providence distributes sorrows and evils; after all, mine are nothing in comparison to the state of my poor aunt. Ah! noble Indifference, where is your abode? you alone constitute our happiness, and without you, all is ineffectual: but since we must suffer, it is better to suffer in this way than in any other.

I have seen Madame de Martel at her own house, and said everything to her that you may suppose. Her husband has written her the most extraordinary accounts of your beauty; he is overwhelmed with your civilities; he gives you the greatest praises; she brought the letter to show it me: I visited her afterwards, and so quitted all your scores. Nothing could be more romantic than your aquatic excursions, and your entertainments in that famous ship the *Royal Louis*. The real Louis is in full march with all his army. The letters from thence say nothing positive, for everyone is kept in ignorance of the place of their destination. Maëstricht is now out of the question. It is reported that they are going to possess themselves of three places, one on the Rhine, another on the Issel, and a third immediately afterwards. I will acquaint you with their names when I know them myself. Nothing can be more confused than the accounts we have from the army; every one is in the dark. It was but the other day, that a person of very considerable rank [1] wrote thus to one of his friends: "I should be glad if you would inform me whither we are going, and if we are to pass the Issel, or lay siege to Maëstricht." So that you may judge what information we have. I assure you all this secrecy makes

[1] Monsieur le Duc.

my heart ache. You are happy in having your husband safe, and doomed to no other suffering than that of having your frightful face to look at all day in a litter. Poor man, he had reason indeed to get on horseback, to avoid the continuance of so disagreeable a sight! For how was it possible to look at it so long? Alas! I remember once when coming from Brittany, you sat opposite to me during the journey; and what pleasure did I not feel in constantly looking on that lovely face? It is true, indeed, we were in a coach; surely then there must be some curse pronounced upon litters [1].

Madame du Pui-du-Fou will not suffer me to bring my little girl with me: she says it is running a great risk; and I therefore submit. I would not willingly put her little ladyship's person in danger, for I love her most sincerely. I have had her hair cut in the present fashion, which suits her extremely well: her complexion, her throat, her little figure, are admirable; she does a thousand little things; she talks, she caresses, she fights, she makes the sign of the cross, she asks pardon, she curtsies, she kisses her hand, she shrugs up her shoulders, she dances, she coaxes, she scolds; in short, she is quite a pet: I amuse myself for hours together with her. I would not that she should die for the world. I told you the other day, I did not know how a mother could help loving her daughter.

LETTER 208

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, May 23, 1672.

My little friend was not at the post-office yesterday when the post came in, so that I had no letters brought

[1] It is asserted, that if two persons, the most fond of each other, were to make a long journey together in the same litter, it would make them hate one another's company most heartily before they reached their journey's end.

me: they are about the town by this time, and I am every moment in expectation of them. This disappointment has vexed me; however, I will have a little chat with you in the meantime. I saw M. de Marignanes this morning, whom I mistook for M. de Maillanes. This embarrassed me a little at first; however, to get out of it as soon as possible, I begged him to explain those two names to me [1], which he did with the greatest politeness: he easily allowed for my mistake, and set me right instantly. He is pleased with me, and I am pleased with him. He has seen your little girl: he tells me your son is as handsome as an angel, and yourself as handsome as two.

I dined yesterday at La Troche's with the Abbé Arnauld, and Madame de Valentiné. After dinner we had Le Camus, his son, and Ytier; they made up an exquisite little concert. After this Mademoiselle de Grignan arrived with her gentleman Beaulieu, her governess Hélène, her woman Marie, her little page Jaquot, her nurse's son, and her nurse Jeanne in her Sunday clothes; she is the neatest country-woman I ever saw. This little troop made a pretty appearance; we viewed them with pleasure, and made them pass on into the garden; I was charmed with the procession from the nursery. Madame du Pui-du-Fou has bewildered my brains in not permitting me to take my little girl with me; for after all, I am not satisfied that she should remain with the nurse in the country; and if the nurse were to pass the summer in Paris, she would die with grief. But, my child, we think of setting out. One day we say, the Abbé and I, "Let us go; my aunt will live till autumn." This is resolved upon. The next day we find her so extremely ill, that we say again, "We must not think of going; it would be barbarous; the next moon will carry her off." Thus we go on from day to day, despairing of an end. You can easily comprehend the state we are in; it is extremely uncomfortable. What makes me most wish myself in Provence is, that I may feel greater regret

[1] This alludes to Madame de Sévigné's natural forgetfulness of persons and names, of which she herself takes notice in former letters.

at the loss of a person who has been always dear to me: I find that if I stay here, the restraint she will occasion me, will weaken my affection for her, and injure my temper. Do you not admire the unaccountable disposition of things in this world, and the unexpected manner in which events often cross our way? All that is certain is, that by some means or other, we are resolved upon going to Grignan this summer. Leave to us the care of getting over this unhappy difficulty as well as we can; and be assured, that the Abbé and I are more inclined to break through a point of good manners, by going hence too soon, than to violate our friendship for you, by staying here longer than is necessary.

I enclose you a note from the Abbé Arnauld, which will inform you of the news: his brother [1], when he set out, desired him to communicate to me all he should send him: the first page is a bungling piece of work, to fix a day to dine with M. d'Harouïs: we accommodate this Abbé as well as we can; he is not often in Paris, and when he is, we are glad of an opportunity to oblige him. He desired me the other day to show him a letter of yours, his brother having highly praised your style. In showing it him, I was myself surprised at the beauty of your periods; they are sometimes truly harmonious. Your style is everything that could be wished, it is finished and perfect; you have only to go on in the same way, and not attempt to do better.

It is now ten o'clock, and I must make up my packet. I have not received your letter. I have been to the post-office; my little man made a great many apologies, but I am not the better for them. My letter is in the hands of factors, and I may as well look for a needle in a bottle of hay. I shall receive it to-morrow, and shall not answer it till Friday. Adieu, my dear child; it is unnecessary to say I love you; you certainly believe it, and you need not fear believing it too much.

[1] M. de Pomponne.

*LETTER 209

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, May 25, 1672.

I see plainly, my charming cousin, that you have this in common with many other people, that you must be praised to be agreeable. Because I assured you some time ago of the pleasure your letters afforded me, you have made your last agreeable from beginning to end. I know it is necessary to be in good humour, and that the subjects should be happily chosen: but above all we must feel that the persons to whom we write will understand us; for otherwise we are negligent. In reality, nothing can exceed your letter; for it abounds with the wisest things expressed in the most pleasing manner. I perfectly agree with you, that we ought to love one another. Nobody knows your value so well as I, and nobody knows mine so well as you. It seems to me too as if no love were wanting on either side; and this love will last, if we do not place more confidence in others than in ourselves. We gain no news from the army; because the plans are not only kept secret, but even when known, it is wished that they should not be told: this is right. You also are right in saying that it is an alarming campaign. I believe with you that it will be a terrible one, and I will tell you why it must necessarily be so. Those who are engaged wish to acquire glory or to die; and those who look on, love extraordinary events. Spectators, let me tell you, are cruel, and unhappy spectators a thousand times more cruel than others.

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to M.* DE CORBINELLI.

(*Enclosed in the Comte* DE BUSSY'S *letter to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.)

You delight me, Sir, by saying I resemble Horace. If it be so, it is to nature I owe the obligation, for I have

never read him. I do not know whether it be from likeness, that I am so delighted with the extracts from him, but I can assure you nothing ever delighted me more. My modesty will, however, prevent me from praising him much in future, lest you should think I am praising myself under his name, as we sometimes do when we praise an officer under whom we have fought. I must, however, repeat, that I am charmed with him; and if he could see your commentary upon him, he would be charmed in his turn. If the King thought as I think of you, I am certain he would order you to read Horace to the Dauphin, and perhaps to himself.

*LETTER 210

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, May 27, 1672.

You need not wish any one to write descriptions for you, for you excel in them yourself. I believe all the wonders you tell me of Provence, but you know how to set them off to the best advantage; and if your beautiful country could express its obligations to you, I am sure it would not fail to do so. I think it would also testify its surprise at your dislike to the divine perfumes it has to boast; never has it witnessed the strange taste of a person refreshing herself upon a dunghill. Your situation was certainly extraordinary, and yet, my child, I can easily comprehend it, for the most unwholesome thing in the world, is to sleep surrounded with perfumes. All excess is hurtful, and the best things are unpleasant when they are forced upon us: what a fine subject for moralising! Your uncle de Sévigné will be very uneasy about you till he understands the truth. You expressed yourself admir-

ably the other day upon the subject, by observing, that every pleasure loses the name when accompanied by abundance, and acquired with facility. I own to you, however, that I long to make the trial; how will you contrive to let me see a little spot of your fairy-land?

I can easily conceive your joy at seeing Madame de Monaco, and hers too. How much you must have had to say to each other! She opens her heart freely upon the most delicate subjects: I should very much like to know what you talked of. Our d'Hacqueville is delighted that you made this charming excursion; he is going into Brittany; he has seen your letter, and so have Guitaud and M. de La Rochefoucauld. They are all pleased with your account, and with your tragic history in particular: it is perfectly told. We are afraid you have killed the poor Diana to give effect to the conclusion: we are willing to give you credit, and to thank you also for driving the lover from your apartment: if you had thrown him into the sea, you would have done better still: he must be an odious fellow, and the bad taste of Diana almost reconciles us to her death: her ghost will walk from the example of M. de B***s [1]. I have informed you of the death of the latter: he would not confess, but sent every priest to the devil, and himself after them: his body is deposited in the church of Saint Nicolas, where the people have taken it into their heads that his spirit is nightly seen all in flames; that it raves, swears, and threatens, in consequence of which they would deny him Christian burial, and cut the throat of the priest who admitted it into the sanctuary. This folly is carried to such a height, that it has been necessary to take the body privately from the church, and apply to the civil power to protect the priest from insult. This was new yesterday morning; but it is not worthy to hold a candle to your love story.

We expect our little Coulanges to-morrow. I am very much concerned at receiving no letter from my son: there is so little regulation observed as to intercourse with

[1] M. de Boufflers.

the army, that we receive no letters scarcely but what come by express. I have heard nothing new to-day; and I have so great an aversion to relate untruths, that I had rather say nothing: whatever I tell you is true, and comes from the best authority. I am now going to Livry; I shall take my little girl, her nurse, and all the little establishment, with me. I wish them to breathe the air of spring: I shall return to-morrow, not being able to be away from my aunt for a longer time; but I will leave my little girl there for three or four days, after which I shall want her with me: she is my chief amusement every morning. It is so long since I walked, or breathed the fresh air, that I must have pity on myself as well as on other people. I am preparing every day for my journey; my travelling-dress is making; my carriage has been ready for a week past: in short, my child, I am half on the wing, and if God should spare the life of our poor aunt longer than we imagine, I shall follow your advice, and set out with the hope of seeing her again.

Write to M. de Laon [1], who is a Cardinal at last: you may guess his joy when I tell you, this dignity has always been the summit of his ambition. I have just written to him. M. d'Harouïs is going to Brittany; he takes d'Hacqueville with him, and our friend Chésières, who will henceforth be more a Breton than a Parisian. The Comte de Chapelles has written to me from the army: he says that he was yesterday, I know not what day he means by yesterday, in a party of consequence, where your wisdom, worth, and beauty, were praised to the skies, and that your love for me was also included. If this last was flattery, it is so agreeable, that I receive it with open arms.

[1] César d'Estrées, who had been Cardinal *in-petto* from August 1671, but the promotion was only then made public.

LETTER 211

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, May 30, 1672.

I had no letter from you yesterday, my poor child: your journey to Monaco had put you quite out of sorts: I was afraid some little disaster of this kind would befall me. I now send you news from M. de Pomponne: the fashion of being wounded has already begun: my heart is very heavy with the fears of this campaign. My son writes by every opportunity; he is at present in good health.

My aunt is still in a deplorable state, and yet we have the courage to think of appointing a day for our departure, assuming a hope which in reality we cannot entertain. I cannot help thinking, that many of the events of life are ill arranged: they are, as it were, rugged stones lying across our way, too unwieldly to be removed, and which we must get over as well as we can, though not without pain and difficulty. Is not the comparison just? I shall not bring my little girl with me; she goes on very well at Livry, and is to stay there during the summer. You never saw Livry in such perfection as it is at present: the trees are most beautifully green, and the honeysuckles are everywhere in profusion. I am not yet tired of their perfume; but you despise our shrubberies, since you have been accustomed to your groves of orange-trees.

I have a very tragical history to communicate to you from Livry. Do you remember that pretended devotee, who walked so steadily without turning his head, that you would have thought he was carrying a glass of water upon it? His devotion has turned his brain. One night he gave himself five or six stabs with a knife, and fell on his knees in his cell, naked, and weltering in his blood. On entering, he was found in this posture. "Good God! brother, what have you done? Who has treated you thus?"

He replied very calmly, "Father, I am doing penance." He fainted away; he was put to bed; his wounds, which were found very dangerous, were dressed; with uncommon care and attention he recovered at the end of three months, and was sent back to his friends.

If you do not think such a head sufficiently disordered, tell me so, and you shall have the story of Madame Paul [1], who is fallen desperately in love with a great booby of five or six and twenty, whom she had taken to be her gardener. The lady has managed her affairs admirably; she has married him. The fellow is a mere brute, and has not common sense; he will beat her soon, he has already threatened to do it; no matter, she was resolved to have him. I have never seen such violent love; there is all the extravagance of sentiments imaginable, were they but rightly applied: but they are like a rough sketch of an ill painting; all the colours are there, they want only to be properly disposed. It is extremely amusing to me to meditate on the caprices of love: yet I really tremble, when I reflect on such an affair as this. What insolence! Alas! where can we hope to find security? This is a curious anecdote indeed, but how unlike the pleasing relations you give me!

I beg you not to forget M. d'Harouïs, whose heart is a masterpiece of perfection, and who adores you. Madame de La Fayette is still indisposed; M. de La Rochefoucauld is still lame. We talk sometimes so dismally, that it seems as if we had no resource but to hang ourselves. Madame de La Fayette's garden is the prettiest thing in the world; it is full of flowers and perfumes; we often spend our evenings there, for she dares not venture into a carriage; we could wish sometimes that you were behind a certain palisade to hear our conversation on certain unknown countries which we think we have discovered. In short, my child, waiting for the happy day of my departure, I go from the Faubourg to my aunt's fireside, and from my aunt's fireside to the Faubourg. Adieu, my beloved child, I am very impatient to hear of you and your

[1] Widow of the gardener at Livry.

little son. The weather must be extremely hot in your climate; I fear for him, and for you much more; for I have never yet had reason to think it possible to love anything so well as you. I embrace dear Grignan. Does he love you as much as ever? I beg him to love me also.

LETTER 212

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Livry, Thursday, June 2, 1672.

I have received the dear excellent volume at last: never did I read anything so amusing, so well written, and, at the same time, so interesting. I cannot sufficiently express my obligation to you, my dear child, for your letter, which is a complete journal; this is a sure proof of the pleasure and interest we take in a correspondence; whereas, when a correspondence becomes disagreeable, we laugh at these minutiæ, we do not wish them to be recorded: but upon this subject you are everything I could wish; and it is no small pleasure to me, whose greatest consists in my correspondence with you.

It is certain, my child, that one of my letters is lost; but I suspect no one in particular; those of consequence reached you, and I am easy about the rest. You seem very well pleased with this Minister, and I am persuaded you will never have occasion to be otherwise. You will easily guess that I allude to the great Pomponne, and it was to know what I said of him, I suppose, that some people had the curiosity to intercept my letter: I cannot however conceive, who could be guilty of so paltry a theft; there can be no great taste to gratify in stealing letters between persons so nearly related as we are: it is a miracle almost if they contain anything interesting to others, for it very rarely happens that they do. However, it is done, and without my being able to imagine by whom. God grant, my dear, that you may never sustain a greater loss.

We know nothing about La Marans, nor what kind of life she leads in her retirement; but Madame de La Fayette will entertain you with some of her reveries as soon as she is able. We think we have discovered something like an episode of a young Prince [1] through the profusion of grief which she exhibited lately; and a few words she dropped by the way, serve to confirm us in this idea. I only hint at our nonsensical notions to you now, but will explain them more at large hereafter. But *apropos* of explaining; you have explained to me too well the perils and dangers you have been in during your voyage: for my part I cannot comprehend them; that is, I cannot comprehend how people can expose themselves so much: I had infinitely rather go upon one of the present expeditions. I could better meet death in the ardour of fight, spurred on by emulation, and the noise of drums and trumpets, than sit and see two immense waves bidding for my life, and threatening me at every instant with destruction. And then again on the other hand, your Alps, where the path is scarcely so broad as your litter, so that your life depends entirely on the surefootedness of your mules! Indeed, my child, the thoughts of these things make me tremble from head to foot; my service to that country, but I will never go there while I live, and I tremble for you: Madame de Monaco never had a lover in her life who would have ventured so much for her. What you say about the *first* and the *last* is admirable; it is truly epigrammatical. Did you not talk about MADAME [2]? Is she pretty well reconciled to her loss? Is she still lame [3]? Is she not very much mortified to see herself on that side the Alps? Does she not intend returning to Paris if possible? I pretty well guess her joy at seeing you: your conversations were doubtless without end, and she could

[1] This is the Duc de Longueville to whom Madame de Sévigné is alluding.

[2] Madame de Monaco was the chief favourite of Madame, (Henrietta Anne of England, sister of Charles II.) who died June 29, 1670.

[3] By a bleeding badly performed.

never sufficiently express her obligations to you for such a visit. It is true, she returned it very speedily, but it was not attended with the same circumstances. You speak of the Princesse d'Harcourt [1] in a very pleasant manner. Brancas is very much disturbed; I don't know for what reason: he is a volunteer in the army; and as he is out of humour at a thousand things, he will muse perhaps or fall asleep just in the mouth of a cannon: he knows no other way of getting rid of his misfortunes. He wrote the other day to Madame de Villars and to me: the superscription was *To Mr. de Villars at Madrid.* Madame de Villars, who knows him well [2], opened the letter, and the first words she found were *my dear girls.* We have not answered it yet. You say I never mention your brother: indeed I cannot tell why, for I am sure I think of him incessantly, and am extremely uneasy about him: I love him very much; he conducts himself so well towards me, and his letters are written in such a style, that whoever should find them in my desk after my death, would think they were written by one of the best young men of his age. This war therefore gives me great concern. My son is at present in the King's army; that is, in the lion's mouth, as well as the rest.

We shall not be long without hearing great news: my heart flutters with apprehension at the thought. The Marquis de Castelnau has the small-pox. It was reported yesterday that Desmarêts, son of the grand falconer, and Bouligneux, had died of the same disorder; if I do not contradict this in my letter to-morrow from Paris, you may depend on it for truth. I came here this morning in my carriage alone, in order to take back my little girl. I must purchase a bonnet and a frock for her. I shall have her with me till two or three days before my departure; she is very well; she is pretty without being hand-

[1] Françoise de Brancas, mentioned in Letter 202, of May 4th, 1672, in this volume.

[2] The Comte de Brancas is the same whom La Bruyère intended to represent under the name of *Menaclas,* in his treatise on the *Memoirs of the Age.*

some. She does a hundred little things that fascinate me.

Master Paul's widow is really gone mad; there has been a stop put to her wedding; her great booby of a lover cares no longer for her, but thinks Marie[1] very pretty, and very good-humoured; in short, my child, she did not play her cards well: I tell you fairly, if ever I had wished to make a conquest, I should certainly have contrived to keep you out of the way. What is passing here is quite in the style of a tragi-comic romance. Nothing is heard of but darts, flames, furies, and despair. Methinks I see one of the little Loves, who are so beautifully described in the prologue of *Aminte,* as concealing themselves in the woods: I fancy him taking aim at poor Marie; but the wisest may be mistaken, and he shot the mother instead of the daughter: be that as it may, the wound is incurable. Were you here, you would be extremely diverted at this odd adventure, and at the overgrown clown who is the hero of the piece. I assure you I have my hands full, and am obliged to take Marie away with me, to prevent her from transplanting her mother. Alas, how these poor mothers are to be pitied!

Do not think Madame de La Fayette's illness can retard my journey; she is no longer in danger: and since I can venture to set out notwithstanding the condition my poor aunt is in, you may believe nothing will prevent me. M. de Coulanges did not expect to find her alive; she was so much changed he would not have known her. She takes pleasure in nothing; she is half in heaven, and a true saint; she thinks but of her grand journey, and easily understands the one I am about to take: she gives me leave to quit her, with a heart wholly weaned from the world; she enters into all my feelings: this sensibly affects me, and I cannot but admire the counterpoise which God has set against the ineffable joy that I should otherwise have in coming to you. I shall leave my poor aunt half dead; this idea stings me to the soul, and I shall be in continual ap-

[1] The daughter of Madame Paul.

prehension for my son's safety. Ah! how truly this savours of the world! You say that we must cease to wish for anything; you may add, and learn to be perfectly contented; but that is a state not reserved for mortals.

You are returned to Grignan, again; well, my dear child, stay there till I come and fetch you away. Our dear Abbé agrees with me, and so does La Mousse. You never had a little party set out to you with greater joy and alacrity. Adieu, my love, till to-morrow, when I shall write to you from Paris, if only two lines. I am now going to amuse myself with a turn in these delightful walks, where I have seen you so many thousand times, and where I shall most infallibly think of you.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *writes to Monsieur* DE GRIGNAN.
(*Enclosed in her letter to her Daughter.*)

You flatter me too much, my dear Comte; I shall accept of but one part of your fine speeches, and that is the thanks you return me for having given you a wife, who constitutes all your happiness; for indeed, I think I contributed a little towards it: but the authority you have acquired over her in Provence, has been wholly owing to yourself, to your merit, your birth, and your conduct: all this I have nothing to do with. Ah! how much you lose by my heart not being at ease! Le Camus is delighted with me; he tells me I sing his airs extremely well: he certainly composes divinely; but I am so dull and woebegone, that I can learn nothing; you would sing them like an angel: I assure you Le Camus has a high opinion both of your voice and judgment. I regret the loss of these little accomplishments which we are too apt to neglect: why should we lose them? I have always said that we ought not to part with them, and that they can never be an encumbrance: but what is to be done with a rope round the neck? You have given my daughter one of the most delightful journeys in the world; she is quite enchanted with it! but then you have dragged her over hills and

dales, and exposed her to the dangers of the Alps, and to the uncivil waves of the Mediterranean: in short, I have a month's mind to chide you for it; but let me first embrace you most affectionately.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *continues and concludes her Letter to her Daughter.*

Friday, June 3, 1672.

Here I am in Paris again, where I find our two gentlemen [1] are not so dead as they were yesterday. Maréchal Villeroi's lady is at the point of death. No news from the army.

LETTER 213

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, June 6, 1672.

As I received no letter from you yesterday, which was a great disappointment to me, I imagined you were engaged in receiving Madame de Monaco; what comforts me is, that you are in a place where you may plant cabbages, and are no longer exposed to waves and precipices. I have been under terrible apprehensions, in reflecting on the dangers of your journey.

My aunt received the viaticum again to-day, as a preparative to her own journey, with angelic devotion. Her preparation, her patience, her resignation, are things so much above nature, that they deserve to be considered as so many miracles of religion: she is entirely weaned from the world; her present state, painful as it is, is the only desirable one to a true Christian. She insists upon our taking our journey, as I have already told you; we intend to obey her; but we sometimes believe she will go before us. In a word, we have fixed upon a day; and if I had not

[1] Desmarêts and Bouligneux, mentioned in the preceding part of the letter.

for some time been accustomed not to do what I wish, I should give you notice not to write to me any more: but this I dare not venture to do: for I love your letters so well, that I had rather receive them at Grignan, than be disappointed of them here.

You know the Marquis de Villeroi has left Lyons and Madame de Coulanges, to go, like the knight of the black armour, into the army of the Elector of Cologne, that he may have the honour of serving the King at least in the army of his allies. There are different opinions, whether he has done well or ill. The King does not love to be disobeyed, yet he may approve this martial ardour; the success will show how we are to judge of it.

You have had the comedians with you: I dare answer for it, that in whatever way your theatre was decorated, it was better than that at Paris. I remarked this the other day, as I was amusing myself with Beaulieu. "Madame," said he, "there are none but apprentices now who frequent plays; you do not see there so much as a page or footman; everybody is in the army. If a man appears in the streets with a sword by his side, the little children hoot at him as he passes along." Such is the face of Paris at present; but it will make another appearance in a few months.

You say humorously, that you fear you should rob me of something, by polishing your letters: take care, I beseech you, and do not give them a second touch, or you will make them perfect pieces of eloquence. The pure tone of nature in which you write is the best, and pleases more than any. Keep your own amiable mind, it has larger eyes than those in your head: though these are well enough considering.

I shall send you word that I am setting out when you least expect it. Madame de Villeroi[1] is recovering. There is no better news than what I send you: I always inquire after news, and everyone takes a pleasure in telling it me, because they know I do not inquire for myself. I am in pain, my dear, about the symptoms your fever has

[1] Madeleine de Créqui.

left behind it. It is impossible for me not to wish for to-morrow, that I may hear from you. I embrace you with extreme tenderness.

LETTER 214

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, June 13, 1672.

I enclose a letter of my son's, which will amuse you. You will be pleased with the accounts he gives of what is passing in the army. You will see that the King is so perfectly happy, that for the future he will only need to say what he desires to have done in Europe, without being at the trouble of placing himself at the head of his army; and everyone will think himself happy in obeying his orders. I am informed he will pass the Issel with as much ease as he can pass the Seine. Terror everywhere paves the way for victory; the joy of the courtiers is a good omen. Brancas writes that they laugh incessantly from morning to night. I have a little history that I must send you.

Immediately upon the death of the old Bourdeille, M. de Montausier wrote to the King, to ask the place of Sénéchal of Poitou for M. de Laurière his brother-in-law: the King granted it. Soon after, young Matha asked it, and told the King that this post had been a long time in the family. The King wrote to M. de Montausier desiring him to give it up, promising to give something else to M. de Laurière. M. de Montausier wrote back to His Majesty, that, for his part, he should be extremely glad to have it in his power to give it up; but that his brother-in-law having already received the compliments of the Province, it was impossible; and that His Majesty might provide in some other way for young Matha. The King was piqued at this, and bit his lips: "Well," said he, "he shall have it for three years; but after that I shall give it

to young Matha, with whom it shall always remain." This is a very unfortunate incident for M. de Montausier.

I should have sent this to M. de Grignan, but it is the same thing; my last two letters are written equally to you both, and are not equivalent to one good one. You will not have a Provençal for a first President; I have been told so from good authority. The Bishop of Marseilles came to see me yesterday, with the Marquis de Vence, and two Deputies; I thought he had been going to make me an harangue. Adieu, my dear child; I beg you will be very glad to see me, come when I will, and think of the pleasure I shall receive. This is a very foolish letter; I should be better employed in sleeping, than in writing.

LETTER 215

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, June 17, 1672,
11 o'clock at night.

I have just heard a melancholy piece of news, the particulars of which I cannot give you, because I am not yet informed of them; all I have heard is, that M. de Longueville was killed in crossing the Issel[1]: this is grievous intelligence. I was at Madame de La Fayette's, with M. de La Rochefoucauld, when I first heard it; and was told at the same time that M. de Marsillac was wounded, and that the Chevalier de Marsillac[2] died of his wound. This storm fell on him in my presence; he was deeply afflicted with it; his tears flowed from his heart, for his firmness of mind prevented any unmanly expression of grief.

After hearing this, I had not the patience to inquire any farther. I flew to M. de Pomponne's, who reminded me that my son was in the King's army, which had no part in this expedition; it was reserved for the Prince, who, it

[1] The *Rhine* it should be, for the *Issel* was abandoned.

[2] Two sons of M. de La Rochefoucauld.

is said, is wounded; it is said too, that he passed the river in a little boat, that Guitry and Nogent are drowned, M. de La Feuillade and Roquelaure wounded, and that a great number have perished on this fatal occasion. When I know the particulars, I will inform you.

Guitaud has just sent a gentleman to me from the Condé Mansion; from him I learn that the Prince was wounded in the hand, that M. de Longueville [1] forced the barrier and presented himself the first; he was also the first who fell, being instantly killed; the rest differs but little from what I told you above: M. de Guitry and M. de Nogent drowned, M. de Marsillac wounded, and a great many others also that are not yet known. But the Issel (Rhine) is crossed. The Prince is represented in the boat giving his orders with the composure and divine courage that characterise him. M. de Marsillac was wounded by a musket-shot in the shoulder, and in the jaw, but the bone is not injured. Adieu, my dear child; my mind is somewhat disturbed, for though my son is in the King's army, he will have so many opportunities of signalising himself that I tremble, and die with apprehension.

*LETTER 216

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, June 19, 1672.

Your great boy is now in my room. I sent my carriage to bring him to dinner with me. My uncle, the Abbé, who was here, gave him a sheet of paper folded up, which, as he found on opening it, contained the genealogy of the Rabutins. He was very much pleased with it, and is now amusing himself in tracing from whence he came. If he amuse himself in the same way in thinking where he

[1] The Duc de Longueville, heated by wine, spurred on his horse to the very bank of the entrenchment of the enemy; he then fired his pistol, crying that he would give no quarter. The enemy immediately fired, and killed him upon the spot.

shall go, we shall not dine very soon; but I will spare him the trouble of this meditation, by assuring him he is going in the direct road to death, and a speedy death too, if he follows your profession, which there is every appearance he will do. I am certain the idea will not spoil his appetite: he springs from too noble a blood to be surprised at this melancholy intelligence. But I cannot imagine how a person can be exposed a thousand times, as you have been, without being killed as often. This reflection has occupied my mind all day. The death of M. de Longueville, Guitry, Nogent, and many others; the wounds of the Prince, Marsillac, Vivonne, Montrevel, de Revel, the Comte de Saulx, de Termes, and a thousand others, whom I am not acquainted with, have given me a dreadful idea of war. I cannot comprehend the crossing the Rhine by swimming. To throw themselves in on horseback, like so many hounds pursuing a stag, and to be neither drowned, nor knocked on the head in landing, confounds my imagination so much, that it makes me quite giddy. God has preserved my son hitherto; but who can consider himself safe in a battle? Adieu, my dear cousin, I am going to dinner. Your son is well made, and pleasing in his manners. I am glad you like my letters. I cannot be of your opinion without great vanity.

*LETTER 217[1]

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, June 26, 1672.

It would seem, Madame, by your letters, as if none but soldiers died. But the truth is, war only hastens the death of some, who, if they had not engaged in it, would have lived a little longer. For my part, I have been in many a perilous situation, without being even wounded.

[1] This letter being an answer to the foregoing one has been placed out of its proper chronological order.

Misfortune has visited me in a different way; and, to speak candidly, I prefer having lived a little unhappily, to dying young. A hundred thousand people have been killed in the first action in which they were engaged, and a hundred thousand in the second: *Cosi l'ha voluto il fato*—so fate has decreed. But I see you are alarmed, and I must cheer you by saying, that ten campaigns are sometimes made without drawing a sword, and that we are often in battles without seeing the enemy; for instance, when we are in the second line, or rear guard, and the first line decides the combat, as in the battle of the Dunes in 1658. In the field, the officers of the cavalry are in greater danger than other officers; in sieges, the officers of the infantry are a thousand times the most exposed; and here, Madame, I must relate to you, what M. de Turenne told me he heard someone say to the late Prince William of Orange, that young women thought men always in a situation to marry, and that monks thought soldiers in the army had always drawn swords in their hands. The interest you take in this campaign makes you reflect as you never reflected before. If your son were not in the service, you would consider this action, as you have done a thousand others that have been mentioned to you, without emotion, and you would call crossing the Rhine a bold, not a rash act, as you now do. Believe me, my dear cousin, the generality of things are great or little only as our imagination makes them so. The swimming across the Rhine is a noble act, but it is not so rash a one as you suppose. Two thousand horses cross to attack four or five hundred. The two thousand are supported by a numerous army, where the King commands in person, and the four or five hundred are troops terrified by the sudden and vigorous manner in which the campaign was begun. If the Dutch had possessed more firmness in this encounter, they would only have killed a few more men, and in the end have been overpowered by numbers. If the Prince of Orange had been on the other side of the Rhine, with his army, I do not think our troops

would have attempted to cross over to meet him; if they had, that would have been rash [1]. Yet Alexander did so in crossing the Granicus. He swam over with fifty thousand men, in defiance of a hundred thousand men who opposed him. It is true, if he had been beaten he would have been called a fool; and it is only because he succeeded, that it has been proclaimed the most glorious enterprise in the world.

I am glad, my dear cousin, that your hatred of war proceeds only from your fears for the future, and that M. de Sévigné has escaped so well. It is to be hoped that he will always be equally fortunate, though Maréchal de La Ferté tells us that war says: *Wait for me, I shall have thee.* Let me know if M. de Sévigné was ordered to go over. If my son pleases you, he may possibly please others: you are a model both of discernment and taste.

LETTER 218

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, June 20, 1672.

I cannot reflect upon the situation you have been in, without great emotion; and though I know you are out of danger, yet I cannot turn my eyes on what has passed, without a horror that distracts me. Alas! how much was in the dark about a health that was so dear to me! If any one had told me, that my daughter was in greater danger than if she had been in the army, how little should I have believed it! Must I suffer this useless grief in addition to so many other sorrows that afflict my heart? The extreme danger my son is in; the war, which rages every day with greater violence; the couriers, who bring no other

[1] Bussy judged as posterity has done of the crossing the Rhine, which was the subject of so many exaggerated praises: but whether this letter was showed, or was written or mentioned to others, the Court knew his opinion, and was less eager to recall him from exile.

news but the death of some friend or acquaintance, and may bring accounts still more fatal; the fear of hearing ill news, and yet the curiosity of knowing it; the desolation of those who are in excess of grief, and with whom I pass a great part of my time; the strange state of health my aunt is in, and my extreme desire of seeing you; all this afflicts and consumes me, and forces me to lead a life so contrary to my inclination, that I have need of more than a common share of health to support it.

You have never seen Paris as it is at present; all the world is in tears, or fears to be so. Poor Madame de Nogent is almost beside herself. Madame de Longueville pierces every heart with her complaints. I have not seen her indeed, but this is what I am told. Mademoiselle de Vertus returned two days since from Port-Royal, where she resides. They sent for her and M. Arnauld to impart to Madame de Longueville the terrible news. The very sight of Mademoiselle de Vertus was sufficient; her sudden return was too sure a sign that some fatal accident had happened. As soon therefore as she appeared—"Ah! Mademoiselle, how is it with my brother[1]?" She did not dare, even in thought, to inquire farther. "Madame, he is recovered of his wound—there has been a battle"—— "And my son?"——No answer was made. "Ah! Mademoiselle, my son, my dear child! answer me; is he dead?" —"I have no words to answer you, Madame."——"Oh my dear son! Was he killed on the spot? Had he not a single moment? Oh, God! what a sacrifice is this!" And she threw herself upon the bed, and by expressions of the most lively sorrow, by fainting fits, by convulsions, by the silence of despair, by stifled cries, by sudden bursts of passion, by floods of bitter tears, by eyes up-lifted to heaven, and by heart-rending complaints, she exhibited all the various emotions of grief. She sees a few friends; and in pure submission to Providence, consents to receive such nourishment as is just sufficient to keep life and soul together. She takes no rest; her health, before in a de-

[1] The Prince de Condé, (The Great Condé).

clining state, is visibly altered for the worse. For my part, I wish her death earnestly, as I cannot think she can survive such a loss. There is a certain gentleman [1] who is scarcely less affected: I cannot help thinking, that if they had met, in the first moments of their grief, and had been alone together, all other sentiments would have given place to sighs and tears, redoubled without intermission; there would have been a dumb scene of sorrow, a dialogue of inarticulate sighs and groans. This is a mere thought of my own. But, my dear, how great affliction is this! The very mistresses of poor de Longueville do not constrain themselves; his domestics are disconsolate; and his gentleman, who came yesterday with the ill news, scarcely appears a reasonable creature. This death effaces the thoughts of all others.

A courier, who arrived yesterday evening, brings an account of the death of the Comte du Plessis [2], who was killed by a cannon-shot, as he was giving directions for making a bridge. Arnheim is besieged by M. de Turenne. They did not attack the fort of Skenk, as it was defended by eight thousand men. Alas! these successful beginnings will be followed with a tragical end for a great number of families. May heaven preserve my poor son! He was not upon this expedition; but the campaign is not yet finished.

In the midst of our afflictions, the description you have given me of Madame Colonne and her sister [3], is really divine; it rouses one under the most melancholy circumstances: it is an admirable picture. The Comtesse de Soissons, and Madame de Bouillon [4], are quite in a rage with these fools, and say they ought to be confined. It is thought that the King will not disoblige the Constable [5]

[1] M. de La Rochefoucauld.

[2] Alexandre de Choiseul, Comte du Plessis, son of César, Duc de Choiseul, Maréchal of France.

[3] Hortensia Mancini, Duchesse de Mazarin.

[4] Sisters of Mesdames de Colonne and Mazarin.

[5] The father of these ladies, and one of the most powerful families in Rome.

(Colonne), who is certainly one of the greatest men in Rome. In the meantime we are in expectation of seeing them arrive here like Mademoiselle *de l'Etoile* [1]: this comparison is good.

The accounts I send you are from the best authority; you will find by all you receive, that M. de Longueville has been the cause of his own death, as well as of the death of many others; and that the Prince has showed himself through the whole of this expedition, more like a father, than the General of an army. I said yesterday, and others agreed with me, that if the war continues, the Duc [2] will certainly occasion the death of the Prince; his love for him surpasses every other consideration.

La Marans affects to appear overwhelmed with grief. She says that she sees very plainly there is something in the news from the army, which is concealed from her; and that the Prince, and the Duc, are dead, as well as M. de Longueville. She conjures people, by all that is sacred, to speak out, and not to spare her; and tells them, that in her deplorable situation, it is in vain to hide anything from her. If it were possible for us to laugh under these circumstances, we should laugh at her. Alas! if she knew how little any of us think of concealing anything from her, and how much every one is taken up with his own griefs and his own fears, she would not have the vanity to believe we paid so much attention to her as to deceive her.

The news I send you, comes, as I before said, from good authority; I had it from de Gourville, who was with Madame de Longueville when she heard of her son's death. All the couriers come straight to him. M. de Longueville had made his will before he set out. He leaves a great part of his property to a son he has, who, as I believe, will take the title of Chevalier d'Orléans [3], without expense to

[1] In Scarron's *Comic Romance.*

[2] Henri-Jules de Bourbon, son of the Prince.

[3] He appeared under the name of the Chevalier de Longueville, and was accidentally killed at Philisbourg in 1688, by a soldier, who was shooting at a snipe. See Letter 225, of the 8th of July following, in this volume.

his relations. Have you heard how the body of M. de Longueville was disposed of? It was laid in the same boat in which he crossed the river two hours before. The Prince, who was wounded, ordered him to be placed near him, covered with a cloak, and, with several others who were wounded, recrossed the Rhine to a town on this side the river, where they came to have their wounds dressed: it was the most melancholy sight in the world. They say the Chevalier de Montchevreuil, who was attached to M. de Longueville, will not have a wound dressed which he received as he stood next to him.

I have received a letter from my son, he is very much grieved at the death of M. de Longueville. He was not in this expedition, but he is to be in another. What safety can be hoped for in such a profession? I advise you to write to M. de La Rochefoucauld, on the death of the Chevalier, and the wound of M. de Marsillac. This fatal event has given me an opportunity of seeing his heart without disguise: for constancy, worth, tenderness, and good sense, he infinitely surpasses anyone I have ever met with; his wit and humour are nothing in comparison. I will not amuse myself at present with telling you how much I love you. I embrace M. de Grignan, and the Coadjutor.

The same day, at 10 o'clock at night.

I made up my packet two hours ago, and on my return to town, I found a letter for me, with the news that a peace was concluded with Holland. It may easily be imagined that the Dutch are in the greatest consternation, and glad to submit to any terms; the King's success is beyond all that has ever been known. We shall once more breathe again; but what a cruel addition must this be to the grief of Madame de Longueville, and all those who have lost children and near relations! I have seen Maréchal du Plessis; he is greatly afflicted, but demeans himself like a brave soldier. His lady[1] weeps bitterly; the

[1] Colombe Le Charron.

Comtesse [1] is only disconcerted at not being a Duchesse. I think, my dear child, that if it had not been for the rashness of M. de Longueville, we should have gained Holland without losing a man.

LETTER 219

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, June 24, 1672.

I am now in my aunt's apartment: if you could see the condition she is in, you would not doubt that I might take my departure to-morrow. She received the viaticum to-day for the last time; but as her disorder is a complete decay of nature, the last drop of oil is not soon found. She is up, that is, she sits in her chair in her night-gown, with a black hood over her cap, and with her gloves on: her room is perfectly free from any ill scent or discomfort, but her countenance is as much changed as if she had been dead for a week: her bones come through her skin; her flesh is quite wasted away, and shrivelled; she swallows with extreme difficulty, and is speechless. M. Vesou has told her she cannot live, and she no longer takes medicine; she is no longer bloated, because the dropsy has exhausted all the animal juices; and she is no longer in pain, because there is nothing to consume: she is very drowsy, but she still breathes: she has had fits of coldness which made us think she was quite gone; and we were once upon the point of giving her extreme unction. I do not quit my station, for fear of an accident. I assure you, that whatever pleasure I have in view, this last scene will cost me many tears: it is very difficult to bear, constituted as I am. This, my child, is our present situation. Three weeks ago she gave us leave to set out, because she had a little remains of ceremony; but now the mask is taken off, she makes the Abbé and myself understand by her gestures,

[1] Marie-Louise Le Loup de Bellenave.

that it is a great comfort to have us both with her in her last moments: this affects us extremely, and shows us that death is no hypocrite. I say nothing of the day of my departure:

> Comment pourrois-je vous le dire?
> Rien n'est plus incertain que l'heure de la mort[1].

But provided you do not send us word to delay our journey, it is very certain we shall soon set out. Let us therefore manage for ourselves: you know how I hate self-condemnation; and the thought that I had neglected the last duties to my poor aunt, would be a perpetual vulture gnawing in my breast. I omit nothing I can do for her on this melancholy occasion.

I have not seen Madame de Longueville; she is very ill; she has only been seen by a few distinguished personages, and I have not the honour to be one of them, nor any claim to be so. It does not appear that peace is concluded, as I informed you it was; but there seems to be a good understanding everywhere, and so great a readiness to submit, that the King has only to present himself before the gates of a city, and it immediately surrenders. Had it not been for the rashness of M. de Longueville, which caused his own death and the death of so many others, all would have been well: but, in reality, Holland itself, Holland entire, could not compensate his loss. Do not fail to write to M. de La Rochefoucauld on the death of the Chevalier, and the wound of M. de Marsillac, but be careful not to fall into an error: this it is that afflicts him: alas! my dear child, I lie: between you and me he has scarcely felt the loss of the Chevalier, and is inconsolable at the death of him whom every one laments. You should also write to Maréchal du Plessis. All our friends are in good health. Little La Troche was one of the first who plunged into the river; he has been much noticed in consequence. If I am still here, when you write, mention the

[1] How can I? nothing is more uncertain than the hour of death. [Translation.]

circumstances to his mother; it will give her great pleasure.

My poor aunt desired me the other day by gestures, to remember her to you, and to bid you adieu for her: she made us weep: she was very much concerned to hear of your illness. Our Abbé sends a thousand compliments to you: you must write some little word of kindness to him, to keep up his earnest desire to see you. You are now at Grignan. I hope I shall be there in my turn as well as the rest. Alas! I am quite ready; I cannot help wondering at the waywardness of my fate; it is enough for me to wish a thing, to find some obstacle to it. I am perfectly satisfied with the care and friendship of the Coadjutor for you, but I will not write to him; he will love me the better for it; I shall be overjoyed to see him, and converse with him.

The Marquis de Villeroi is remanded back to Lyons. The King would not permit him to remain with M. de Munster. Jarzé [1] has had leave to stay, and get broken bones. You know he was exiled as well as the Marquis.

LETTER 220

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, June 27, 1672.

My poor aunt received extreme unction yesterday: you never beheld a more pitcous spectacle; she only just breathes, and that is all I can say: I shall soon let you know more. It is impossible to behold without emotion the painful death of a person I have always so much loved and honoured. You reason extremely well upon the subject; I shall follow your advice, and after having decided, will

[1] It was the same Jarzé who, at the instigation of the great Condé, declared a ridiculous passion for Queen Anne of Austria. He had then been sent from Court, and, at last, returned only to be exiled, on the charge of having taken a part in the intrigues of some women at Monsieur's during the King's illness. Ménage speaks of him as being a great wit.

share the triumph with you, and set out exempt from the uneasiness and remorse I predicted: so impossible is it for our own thoughts not to deceive us. I imagined that what with sorrow at leaving my aunt, and fears for my son's safety, my heart would be torn with anguish. God has prevented the one, I shall fulfill my most sacred duties; and the King's success has provided against the other, since Holland has surrendered without further resistance, and the Deputies are at Court, as I informed you the other day. Let us therefore, my child, abandon the idea that we can form just opinions of the future; and let us think of nothing but the misfortune of Madame de Longueville, which, having really taken place, we cannot be deceived in. The war seems to have been waged on purpose to kill her poor son; the next moment all was peace; and in short, the King is now fully occupied in receiving Deputies from the different towns that surrender. He will return Comte of Holland (Comte de Hollande). This is a wonderful victory, and shows that nothing can resist his forces or his command: the safest way is to honour and fear him, and never to speak of him without admiration.

I have at length seen Madame de Longueville. Chance placed me near her bed: she made me draw still nearer to her, and was the first who spoke; for I never abound in words on these occasions. She said she did not doubt that I pitied her, and with justice, for her misfortune was complete. She mentioned Madame de La Fayette and Monsieur d'Hacqueville as those of her friends who she imagined would sympathise the most with her: she talked of my son, and of the friendship her son entertained for him. I shall not trouble you with my replies; they were such as the nature of the conversation required; and, in fact, I was so much affected, that it was impossible to speak amiss. I was soon obliged to give place to the crowd of visitors. When I put myself in the place of this unfortunate woman, the circumstance of peace appears the most cruel blow that could have been given to the heart; when I return to myself again, I bless heaven for it,

since it is the means of preserving my dear Sévigné to me, and the rest of our friends.

You are now at Grignan; you want to terrify me, with the fear that I shall not be able to walk out when I come, and that there will be no pears or peaches left; but you, my dear child, will be there, and when I am tired of counting the boards in your rooms, shall I not have your fine terraces to walk on? Will you not give me some dried figs and grapes? Say as you please, I shall very willingly expose myself to the dryness of the country, trusting I shall meet with no other dryness. I only foresee a little dispute that is likely to arise between us, about your little boy, whom you will wish me to love better than my little girl, which I do not think is possible, for I am so much attached to the dear child, that I feel great regret in the idea of leaving her behind.

Monsieur de La Rochefoucauld is very uneasy about M. de Marsillac's wound; he is apprehensive it may terminate in a mortification. I do not know whether you should write to Madame de Longueville, or not, but I think you ought. I have seen a good caricature lately on Holland, which is represented by a Comtesse, apparently a hundred years of age, and very ill: she is attended by four physicians, who are the Kings of England, Spain, France, and Sweden. The King of England desires her to show him her tongue, and cries, "Ah! what a foul tongue!" The King of France feels her pulse, and says, "She must be bled copiously." I do not remember what the rest say; but it is on the whole a very humorous and just satire.

I am extremely glad you are not with child, for now you will soon be free from all your other disorders: I do not believe a syllable of your loss of beauty. I have seen two or three Provençals, whose names I have forgotten. Provence, however, is become very dear to me: it has quite effaced my regard for Brittany and Burgundy: in comparison I despise them.

LETTER 221

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, July 1, 1672.

At length, my child, our dear aunt's sufferings are at an end. She has cost us many tears. I, who am so easily affected, have in particular wept profusely. She was found dead in her bed at five o'clock yesterday morning. The preceding evening she was extremely ill, and would get up from restlessness; but she was so weak that she could not sit in her chair, and kept sinking down and falling out of it, so that she was obliged to be supported. Mademoiselle de La Trousse flattered herself that this weakness proceeded only from want of sustenance: her mouth was convulsed; my cousin said the milk she had taken had merely made her mouth uncomfortable; for my part, I believed her dying. At eleven o'clock she made a sign to me to leave her: I kissed her hand, she gave me her blessing, and I quitted the apartment. She then took a little milk to oblige Mademoiselle de La Trousse, but could not swallow it. They laid her in the bed; she made every one leave the room, saying she was going to sleep. About four in the morning word was brought to Mademoiselle de La Trousse that Madame was asleep; upon which she ordered her not to be disturbed upon any account. At five she said she would go and see if she were still asleep: they went to the bed-side, and found her dead. Upon which a melancholy scene ensued! It was with difficulty they could disengage her daughter from the corpse: however, they contrived to carry her into another room. They next came to acquaint me; I immediately ran thither in great agitation, and found my poor aunt cold and stiff, but laid so much at her ease, that I do not think she had for six months experienced so tranquil a moment as that in which she expired: she was not at all changed. I kneeled by her, and when I had paid my tribute of tears to this

mournful sight, I went in quest of Mademoiselle de La Trousse, whom I found in a condition that might have melted the very stones. I brought her hither with me, and in the evening Madame de La Trousse came and took my cousin home with her, from whence she proposes removing her to the family seat, till the return of M. de La Trousse. I am now ready to set out, having no longer anything to detain me; and so, my dear, farewell.

I have been promised some news; I am in expectation of it: it seems the King continues the chain of his conquests. But you take no notice of the death of M. de Longueville, nor of the pains I have taken to supply you with intelligence: not a word about my letters! In short, I fancy I am writing to one deaf and dumb. But I see how it is; I must absolutely come to Grignan; your patience is worn threadbare. Our Abbé sends you a thousand good wishes; I perfectly adore him for his noble perseverance in making the journey to Provence.

LETTER 222

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Sunday, July 3, 1672.

I am going to take my little girl to Livry; be not uneasy on her account, I am extremely careful of her, and I certainly love her much better than you do. I shall go and take leave of M. d'Andilly to-morrow, and return on Tuesday to purchase some trifles, after which, I shall set out immediately, leaving my letter with my good La Troche, who undertakes to tell you all the news. She is much better qualified for this office than I am: the interest she has in the army gains her better information than almost any other person receives, and especially one who for four days past has been occupied with tears, mourning, masses, funerals, and even death. I own I was overwhelmed with vexation, when my servant came and told

me there were no letters for me by the post; this is the second time I have been disappointed, and though I believe it is the fault of the post, or of your journey, it does not alter my feeling: as I am not accustomed to disappointments of this nature, I bear them with very ill grace. You have been so ill that I am always fancying some misfortune will happen to you, and you have been so rash since you left me, that I have reason to fear every evil because you do not fear any. Adieu, my dearest, I would say more if I had heard from you.

LETTER 223

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Livry, Sunday evening, July 3, 1672.

I have many excuses to make to you, my dear child, for the letter I wrote to you this morning before I arrived here. I had not received yours: my friend at the post-office sent me word that there was no letter for me, and I was in perfect despair. It is now ten o'clock at night; and M. de Coulanges, whom I adore, and who is the best creature in the world, has sent me your letter which was enclosed in his packet. He dispatched his own servant with it by moonlight, judging how happy it would make me to receive it, and he judged truly. I am sorry you lost one of my packets; as they were filled with news, it puts you out of the train of affairs, and breaks the thread of your knowledge of what passes.

You must, doubtless, have had very exact accounts, by which you may understand that the Rhine was ill defended. The great wonder is that our troops swam over it. The Prince and his Argonauts [1] were in a boat; and the first part of the enemy's troops they fell in with on the other side of the river, laid down their arms, and de-

[1] The name given to the flower of the Grecian Princes, who accompanied Jason to Colchis, in quest of the Golden Fleece.

manded quarter; but unhappily M. de Longueville, who doubtless did not hear this, hurried on to the entrenchments with warlike ardour, arrived at the barrier, and killed the first man he met. At the same instant he himself received five or six wounds. The Duc followed him; the Prince followed his son, and all the rest followed the Prince. This occasioned a dreadful slaughter, which it is plain would have been avoided, had they known the enemy's intention of yielding. But everything is at the disposal of Providence.

The Comte de Guiche performed an action, the success of which has covered him with glory; whereas had it failed, he would have been considered criminal. He was sent to ascertain whether the river was fordable or not; he said it was, though it is probable he knew the contrary. Whole squadrons swam over on horseback, without breaking their ranks: it is true, he was himself at the head of them. This was never attempted before; it succeeded; he surrounded the enemy's troops, and forced them to yield. You see that his fortune and his valour keep pace with each other. But you have doubtless had particular accounts of this daring adventure.

The Chevalier de Nantouillet fell from his horse into the river; he immediately sank to the bottom, but rose again; a second time he sank, and again he rose: at last, he laid hold of the tail of one of the horses, which brought him safe to land; he mounted it, rushed into the thickest of the battle, received two shots in his hat, and returned in high spirits. This reminds me of Oronte [1], Prince of the Massagètes.

It is very true, that M. de Longueville had been to confession before he went away. As he never boasted of such things, he did not even acquaint his mother with it; the confession was conducted by our friends (of Port-Royal), and the absolution was deferred for more than two months: it is so certain, however, that Madame de Longueville can have no doubt of it: what a consolation this must

[1] A hero in the romance of *Cassandra*.

be to her! He bestowed great sums in purposes of charity, which no one knew of, and which were given on condition they should be kept secret. No man ever possessed more solid virtues, or fewer vices, than he did. He had a little pride, vanity, and haughtiness: but certainly no one ever approached so near perfection. He was above praise; if the world was satisfied with his conduct, that was enough for him. I frequently see persons who have not yet recovered from their concern at his loss; but the generality have already forgotten it. This melancholy news was only a subject of grief for three or four days; the regret of the public for the loss of MADAME [1] continued much longer. The individual interest everyone has in what passes in the army, hinders him from paying much attention to the misfortunes of others. Since the first engagement, nothing has been talked of but surrendered cities, and of the arrival of Deputies to desire the favour of being received among His Majesty's newly-conquered subjects. Do not forget to write a line or two to La Troche, upon her son's having distinguished himself at the passage of the river: he has been praised to the King, as one of the foremost in that adventurous affair. There is no probability that the enemy will defend himself against such a victorious army. The French are certainly very fine soldiers; everything must yield to the brilliancy and hardihood of their actions: in short, no river can now be a defence against their all-conquering valour.

Adieu, my dearest child! Pardon the concern I have felt at having been so long without hearing from you; your letters are so agreeable, that the want of them can be recompensed by nothing but your presence.

[1] The Princess Henrietta Anne of England, Duchesse d'Orléans.

*LETTER 224

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comtesse* DE BUSSY.

Paris, July 7, 1672.

I had resolved, I know not why, to push my impertinence to the utmost extremity, and as I once neglected answering a letter of yours, I determined not to stop there, but to go on in the same way, so long as you did me the honour of writing to me. But in spite of this good resolution I am forced to yield. Your letter disarms me; I can no longer be so brutal, and I never expected to be so weak. I have been very much amused at what you told me, and have omitted to write to you, more from the fear of writing nothing worth reading, than the desire of offending you as I have done. Is it thus you write, Madame? your style partakes of the beauties of the Rouvilles and the Rabutins: it has nothing provincial in it; and instead of apostrophising you in a letter to your husband, I shall write to him in this, if I think of it. This is a change which must necessarily surprise you. You give me a new incentive to be careful of my little shoot, and I should certainly avail myself of it, if I were not going into Provence. But I am going to see this poor Grignan. I do not know whether I shall take Burgundy on my way, but in any case, if I do not inform you of it, it will be because I shall not pass near you, and shall be unwilling to stop. It is a long time since I saw our student. I do not retract a syllable of what I formerly said in his favour: his mind appears to me docile and amiable. I lost my aunt de La Trousse a week ago, after an illness of seven months. Her long suffering and subsequent death have made me shed many tears. I loved and honoured her sincerely. I shall not therefore give your compliments to her, but to my uncle the Abbé, who highly esteems you, and is much obliged by your remembrance.

LETTER 225

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, July 8, 1672.

Well, my dear child, you are now at Grignan, expecting me. I, on my side, am in all the hurry of departure; and if I were to spend the whole day in thinking and wishing, I should not see you so soon; but I am just setting out; and if I write to you again on Monday, you may be assured it will be for the last time. Be as indolent as you please now, that you may have no indolence about you at my arrival. In some respects our dispositions are very opposite; but in many other things, we perfectly agree, and then, as you say, our hearts answer almost to our degree of relationship.

I have been at St. Maur to take my leave, but I had not the power to do it: for, without vanity, the delicacy of Madame de La Fayette is such, that she cannot bear without emotion the loss of a friend like me; these are her own words. I went thither with M. de La Rochefoucauld. We had a great deal of chat upon the road; we found Madame du Plessis there, and Mesdemoiselles de La Rochefoucauld, and Gourville, who, by the stroke of a magic wand, made an admirable supper spring out of the ground for us. Madame de La Fayette kept me there all night. The next day, La Troche and the Abbé Arnauld came to visit me, and found me making up my packets. I bid adieu to M. d'Andilly. I have a thousand other things to do: my heart has not been so much at ease for a long time.

My son has written to me in a style, as if the campaign were finished. He says every thing has yielded to the King; that Grotius [1] is arrived at the camp, to conclude a treaty of peace, and the only difficult thing for His Ma-

[1] Ambassador from the States-General to the Court of France, and pensionary of Rotterdam.

jesty, is to find enemies to oppose him. If he returns as soon as is expected, my son intends to come to us at Grignan. He says a good deal of you; when you write to him, desire him to take this pretty excursion. He has seen the Chevalier de Grignan, who is well, and who told him he did not write to me often. He has never answered my last note: I will forgive him on condition he is not killed.

There are a great many ladies in tears for the death of M. de Longueville: they make the profession of grief ridiculous. They all want to converse with M. de La Rochefoucauld; but he, who has a greater fear of being ridiculous than of anything in the world, has sent them to seek comforters elsewhere.

La Marans affects to appear oppressed with grief. It is ten months since she has seen her sister [1]; they are on ill terms. She was there three days ago in a mask; and without any preamble, or even unmasking, though her sister immediately knew her, she burst into tears, and began thus: "Dear sister, I am come to beg you to tell me, how you felt upon the death of your lover. Did you weep long? Were you able to sleep? Did you feel a weight at your heart? Good God! how did you act? Was it not dreadful? How could you bear it? Did you admit company? Could you read? Did you ever go abroad? Oh! what a sad situation!" In short, my child, can you not fancy you hear her? Her sister made her such answers as she thought proper; and flew to M. de La Rochefoucauld to describe this ridiculous scene to him, who would have laughed at it, if anything could make him laugh. For our parts, we all thought it a folly worthy of her, and not inferior to that fine adventure of hers, when she went to visit the good man M. d'Andilly, fancying him to be the Druid Adamas, to whom the shepherdesses of Lignon re-

[1] Mademoiselle de Montalais. She was a woman of great wit, but of great intrigue. She had been, at the same time, the confidante of Madame, of Mademoiselle de La Vallière, of Madame de Montespan, then Demoiselle de Tonnay, of M. de Guiche, of the King, and others.

sorted to relate their amorous grievances, and to receive consolation from him. I thought this history could not fail to divert you as much as it did us. Dampierre is very much grieved; but not so much as Théobon, who, on account of the death of her brother, has retired to our Sisters of Sainte-Marie.

Castelnau is consoled; she has been told that M. de Longueville once said to Ninon, "Deliver me, Mademoiselle, from the persecution of this fat Marquise de Castelnau." Upon this she has resumed her gaiety so far as to enter again into the dance. As for the Marquise d'Uxelles, her affliction is that of a true friend. The infant son [1] of M. de Longueville is the same of whom you have heard so much; it is one of the finest histories of our days. I trust you will not forget to write to my cousin de La Trousse, whose grief and merit, with regard to the care she has taken of her mother, are above all praise.

Let me entreat you, my dear, whatever others may say, to get some oil of scorpions [2] made, that we may find the remedy with the disease. I was talking of your cousins the other day, when a Provençal assured me, that they were not the only troublesome ones you had at Grignan, for that there was another kind, which, without wounding you severely, did you infinitely more harm. Methinks you look now like Madame de Sotenville in the play: for you will soon have work enough upon your hands to receive a troop, that will put your pigeon-house, farm-yard, warren, and all, in requisition. But, my dear child, I only say this for want of something else to say; for if I thought

[1] This was a child he had by Madame de La Ferté. He left him five hundred thousand livres. Some years after, when Louis XIV. thought of acknowledging his natural children, to set the example and prepare the public for the event, they began with the child of M. de Longueville. He was in the same situation as the children of Madame de Montespan, because Madame de La Ferté gave birth to him during the life of her husband.

[2] Scorpions are very common in Provence, and in most parts of the south of France, especially in low and marshy districts. The oil made from the fat of this reptile is considered as a sovereign remedy for its sting.

you killed a pigeon more on our accounts, I should be very angry with you. You will destroy our Abbé if you tempt him with varieties; your usual table is more than sufficient. La Mousse [1] has been a little staggered in his resolution with the fear of fleas, gnats, scorpions, bad roads, and the noise he may happen to meet with; all these have formed a train of hideous monsters in his poor brain, for which I have laughed at him very heartily: and then to hear him cry, "What a figure I shall make! Lord help me, I am nobody; I am not fit to appear in such company as we shall find there." This is what you may call proud humility. D'Hacqueville is expected here soon, but he is not likely to meet with me. I have taken care to have your compliments presented to Madame de Termes; and why not? M. de Vivonne is very ill of his wounds; M. de Marsillac is very little better, and the Prince is almost well. I have no particular news. We are in continual expectation of peace, and of the entire conquest of Holland. It is said Nimègue makes a show of defending itself: but it only serves for matter of laughter. I send you a pretty madrigal and the Holland Gazette: the paragraph respecting the two sisters [2], and that on the subject of Amsterdam, are very amusing. Adieu, my dear child: but before I seal my letter, tell me, do you think I love you?

LETTER 226

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, July 11, 1672.

Not a word more about my journey: it is so long since we have talked on no other subject, that, at last, it is become tiresome; long expectation blunts joy, as a long continuance of a disease does the pain of it. You will have

[1] This gentleman was to be of the party with Madame de Sévigné and the Abbé de Coulanges, in their journey to Grignan.

[2] Mesdames Colonne and Mazarin.

wasted all the pleasure you would have in seeing me, by waiting so long for it. I have been obliged to see the last duties paid to my poor aunt; but now all is over, and I set out on Wednesday. I shall sleep either at Essonne or Melun. I intend to go by way of Burgundy, but shall not stop at Dijon; I must give a day or two to an old aunt, whom by the bye I do not much care for; however, I will write to you from every place where it can be done; I cannot fix the day. It is delightful weather. Our Abbé is all joy and content; La Mousse is a little fearful of the length of the journey, but I will keep up his spirits: for my own part, I am overjoyed; if you have the least doubt of this, send me word to Lyons, that I may go back again.

This, my child, is all I have to say to you upon the subject. I have taken all imaginable precautions about my dear little girl. I have taken her from Livry, notwithstanding my first resolution. She is a thousand times better here. She had already given me a proof that I did well, for since her return hither, she has had a slight little eruption, called the chicken-pox, which was attended with little or no sickness. Little Pecquet[1] restored her in two visits, whereas had she been at Livry, God knows how much trouble it might have cost us. If you wish to know whether I saw her during her illness, I shall assure you that I did not quit her a moment during the time: I fear infection no more than you do precipices: in short, she is now in full health, and in the midst of every kind of assistance in case of future accidents. Every one has approved my bringing her back from Livry, so all is settled. Adieu, my lovely child. Pray is M. de Grignan desirous that I should visit him in his fine Castle?

[1] She calls him "Little Pecquet" from kindness. He was a great anatomist, and discovered a lacteal vein, which has preserved the name of the *reservoir of Pecquet*. He often gave brandy medicinally, but he also used it freely, and the remedy was the cause of his death.

LETTER 227

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

From Auxerre, Saturday, July 16, 1672.

Well, my child, here I am at last; I am still at a great distance from you, and yet I already feel the pleasure of being somewhat nearer to you. I set out onWednesday from Paris, with the vexation of not having received any letters by Tuesday's post; but the hope of seeing you at the end of my long journey keeps me in spirits. Everyone told me jestingly that I should kill our dear Abbé, in making him take a journey into Provence during the heat of summer; but he laughed at these idle tales, and heaven has rewarded him for it, by the finest weather that heart could wish; there is no dust; it is delightfully cool, and the days are at the longest. What can be wished for more? Our Mousse begins to take courage: we travel mighty gravely. M. de Coulanges would have been of service to enliven us a little. We have found nothing worth reading but Virgil; not Virgil *travesti* I assure you, but Virgil[1] in all the majesty of the Latin and the Italian. To be completely merry, one must be with merry people: you know my way; I am as other people are, but am never the first to begin. I am a little dull at not knowing how affairs go in Holland; when I set out, they were between peace and war. This is the most critical juncture that France has experienced for a considerable time, both with regard to public and private interests.

Adieu, then, my dear child; I hope to find letters from you at Lyons. Let me tell you, you are greatly obliged to our dear Abbé and La Mousse, but not at all to me.

[1] Madame de Sévigné speaks here of a translation of the *Æneid* into Italian verse by Annibal Caro, who is almost the only one who has preserved the beauties of that noble author.

*LETTER 228

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Montjeu, July 22, 1672.

You always speak wonders, M. le Comte: all your arguments are just, and it is very true that, in war, the event makes the action rash or heroic. If the Comte de Guiche had been beaten in crossing the Rhine, the blame would have fallen upon him, for he was only ordered to ascertain whether the river was fordable, and he pronounced that it was when it was not: and it is only because the event succeeded that he is covered with honour. The anecdote of the Prince of Orange delighted me. I verily believe he was right, and that the generality of young women flatter themselves. As for the monks, I did not exactly think with them, but I was not far short of it. You have given me pleasure in undeceiving me: I now begin to breathe. The King may be considered as only on a journey, and taking Holland as he passes by way of amusement. I own I never took so much interest in the war before, and the reason is not very difficult to discover. My son was not commanded to pass the Rhine. He is standard-bearer to the gendarmes of the Dauphin, under M. de La Trousse. I had rather he were in that situation than a volunteer. I observed a word or two of Italian in your letter, and it appeared as if you were learning it: would it were so! You know I have always told you that this only was wanting to your accomplishments. Learn it, my dear cousin, I beg; it will repay your trouble. Since you think me a model of discernment and taste, pray follow my advice. If you had not been at Dijon waiting the unfortunate termination of the poor Comte de Limoges' lawsuit, you would have been in this country when I passed through it, and you would have heard from me, as I told you, from my cousin de Toulongeon. Madame de Toulongeon came there on Monday to see me, and M. Jeannin

pressed me so earnestly to come here, that I could not refuse him. He has made up to me for the day I have given him by a relay, which will take me to-morrow to sleep at Châlons, as I had intended. I found this place very much improved since I was here sixteen years ago: but this is not the case with me, and time, which has given great beauty to these gardens, has robbed me of my youth, which I can never expect to recover. You would have restored it to me more than anyone, by the pleasure I should have had in seeing you, and by the merriment we are sure to have when we meet. But heaven has decreed otherwise, and Jupiter too, who has contented himself with placing me on his mountain, without letting me see all my family. Madame de Toulongeon, my cousin, is pretty and amiable. I did not think she had been so well made, nor that she had so good an understanding. She has told me a great many pleasing things of your daughters, which I readily believe. Adieu, my cousin, I am going into Provence to see my poor Grignan. See what it is to love. I wish you all the happiness you deserve.

LETTER 229

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Lyons, Wednesday, July 27, 1672.

If this date does not please you, I know not what to do for you. I received your two letters yesterday by Madame de Rochebonne [1]. I never saw so surprising a likeness; in short, it is M. de Grignan himself, in the person of a most agreeable woman: she perfectly adores you. I shall not tell you how much I love her, nor how much I can believe you love her. As to her brother-in-law [2], at

[1] Thérèse Adhémar de Monteil, Comtesse de Rochebonne, sister of M. de Grignan.

[2] M. de Châteauneuf, Chanoine-Comte and Chamarier (or Chamberlain) of the church of St. Jean de Lyons; brother of the late Comte de Rochebonne, Commandant for the King in the Lyonnois.

whose house I take up my abode while in this place, he is absolutely captivating; such ease, such freedom reigns about him, as perfectly suits with my temper, and makes me charmed with him. The Controller [1] with his lady, and Madame de Coulanges, came to receive me at the boat: I supped with them, and dined there yesterday. They walk with me, and show me everything that is worth seeing: in short, I am quite ashamed at receiving so many attentions; I cannot conceive what it is that makes them so much esteem me. I would fain have set out to-morrow, but Madame de Coulanges insisted upon another day, as the condition of her coming to Grignan. I readily acquiesced, certain that this arrangement would be agreeable to you; so I shall not leave this place till Friday morning: we shall sleep at Valence. I have good sailors, at least, I desired not to have yours, who are great knaves: they receive charges about me as if I were a Princess. Saturday, about one o'clock in the afternoon I shall be at Robinet [2], at least, as the Chamberlain tells me. If you leave me there, there I shall stay. I shall not mention a word of my excessive joy. Our dear Abbé is well; it is to him that all our compliments are due. La Mousse is still alive. We wish to be with you every moment, and my heart flutters when I think of it.

My equipage came thus far without accident or inconvenience, but yesterday I had the misfortune to lose one of my horses, which was drowned at the watering place. I have now only five, so that I am afraid I shall disgrace you; but it is not my fault. I have had a great many compliments of condolence upon my loss, but I support it with heroism. Madame de Coulanges advises me by all means to stay and spend my summer here; she says it is ridiculous to think of going farther, and so would have me content myself with sending you my compliments. I wish you could hear her when she is saying all this. She will certainly come and see us, if it is only to raise your

[1] M. du Gué-Bagnols, father of Madame de Coulanges.

[2] A landing-place about two leagues distant from Grignan.

spirits. Adieu, my dearest child; your little girl is very well; she is at Paris, taken great care of, and more visited and attended than I am: it was a good thought of mine to leave her there: I love her dearly. But here comes Madame de Rochebonne! I kiss her, and think I am kissing her brother [1]; for which reason, I shall send him no remembrance this time. Oh, what a pleasure it is to be upon the road to you, my dear Comtesse!

LETTER 230

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

From Marseilles, Wednesday, —— 1672.

I sit down to write to you, my dear, after having had a visit from the Controller's lady, and a very beautiful harangue. I am now expecting a present, and the present expects my pistole. I am enchanted with the singular beauty of this place. Yesterday was a heavenly day; and the spot [2] from whence I had a view of the sea, the *bastides*, the hills, and the town itself, surpass everything I have ever seen. But what delights me more than all the rest, is Madame de Montfuron [3]: she is really a charming woman, and it is impossible not to love her. A crowd of Chevaliers came here to receive M. de Grignan [4] on his arrival; names that were known, and names that were unknown; knights-errant, long swords, smart cocked hats, a spice of war, of romance, of embarkations, disembarkations, adventures, chains, slavery, captivity, and captives; all this, to one of so romantic a turn as I am, is inexpressibly delightful. M. de Marseilles paid us a visit yesterday

[1] M. de Grignan.

[2] This place is, in the language of the country, called *la Visto*, and is greatly admired for the beauty of its prospect.

[3] Marie de Pontevez de Buons, wife of Léon de Valbelle, Marquis de Montfuron, and first cousin of M. de Grignan.

[4] M. de Grignan had come thus far to meet his mother-in-law, and conduct her to Grignan.

evening, and to-day we are to dine with him. I tell you the affair is as good as done. The weather is so very bad at present, it makes me dull: we can see neither the sea, the galleys, nor the harbour. With all due respect to Aix, Marseilles is a very charming town, and more populous than Paris: it has, at least, a hundred thousand inhabitants; how many beauties there are I cannot pretend to tell, for I have neither time nor leisure for the calculation. The air in general is thick, so that, upon the whole, I had rather be with you. No place can please without you; and Provence surely less than any other. Thank God that you possess more courage than I do; but do not despise me for my weakness, nor laugh at my chains.

LETTER 231

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Marseilles, Thursday at noon, —— 1672.

The devil is certainly let loose in this town; such dreadful weather was never known in the memory of man! I wonder more than ever at the manners of some people, who are so ostentatiously civil and obliging in all outward things, and yet refuse me what I have most at heart: this is embracing while they strike a dagger into the breast. They thought to dazzle my senses; but in the midst of my civilities, I show them that I can see, and I believe they would laugh as heartily at the farce as myself, if they dared do it: it is all masquerade. We dined yesterday with M. de Marseilles, and a very good entertainment we had. He took me in the afternoon to pay the necessary visits, and left me here at night. The Governor gave us some good music: after which we had some humorous masks, among whom was a very pretty little Greek girl. Your husband surveyed her. Ah! my dear, he is a sad rogue: if you were at all disposed to resentment, you would never look on him again. There is a

Chevalier de St. Mêmes, who in my opinion dances delightfully; he was in the character of a Turk, and it is said he does not hate the pretty Greek. I think with you, that Bétomas is very like Lauzun, and Madame de Montfuron like Madame d'Armagnac, and Mademoiselle des Pennes like the late Mademoiselle de Cossé. We are always talking of Paris, and of our friends there, with everybody who knows it. If there should be an hour of sunshine presently, M. de Marseilles is to take me to gape about. So much for Marseilles and your absence; in the meanwhile I cannot help putting my hand to my head. La Santa Cruz [1] is handsome, fresh-coloured, gay, and unaffected; there is nothing false nor borrowed in her appearance. I desire you will think in time of paying her your compliments, not forgetting to praise her rigadoon, in which she excels. Farewell, my lovely child: the reflection of not seeing you dance among us, absolutely spoils everything of the kind, for me.

LETTER 232

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Marseilles, Thursday midnight, 1672.

I wrote to you this morning, my dear. I now proceed to give you an account how I have passed my time since. I went to mass at the church of St. Victor with the Bishop [2]; from thence we went on board the Réale [3], saw the exercise there, the flags flying, heard the guns fired off, and saw feats of activity performed by a Turk: then we dined; and after dinner away went the Bishop and I, cheek by jowl, to see the Citadel, and the prospect from thence; then we visited the Arsenal, and saw all the magazines, and the hospital; then we walked round the harbour;

[1] Marguerite de Galéans, Marquise de Forbin of Sainte-Croix.

[2] Of Marseilles.

[3] The admiral-galley, so called.

and afterwards returned to supper at the prelate's, where we had all kinds of music. We had a conversation together, in which I said all I thought proper, and without any rudeness, incivility, or anger. I represented to him, coolly and dispassionately, the monstrousness of his proceedings: I told him how much more agreeable to me it would have been, had he given me a real proof of his friendship at Lambesc, instead of loading me with ceremonies and entertainments here at Marseilles, which he must be sensible could only amuse the public. He seemed a good deal confused; and, in fact, the more distant the thing becomes, the more he sees it in its true light. There can be no excuse for not obliging me in such a trifle, when he himself, had he had the least regard for me, might have found a thousand reasons for it, to one objection against it. I repeated to him how plainly he showed his dislike to us on that occasion: for, said I, the pretext was so poor, that it was easy to see through it. At last we parted: but be assured of this, that had we been the best friends in the world, he could not have done me more honours at this place. To-morrow at five o'clock we shall set out; and so I take my leave of you for the present, my dear. I have received your letter, and read all the affectionate expressions it contains with sentiments that cannot be expressed.

LETTER 233

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Lambesc, Tuesday morning, 10 o'clock, —— 1672.

When we reckon without Providence, we must frequently reckon twice. I was dressed from head to foot by eight o'clock; I had drank my coffee, heard mass, taken leave of everybody, the mules were loaded, and the tinkling of their bells gave me notice that it was time to mount my litter; my room was full of people, entreating

me not to think of setting out on account of the heavy rain which had fallen incessantly for several days, and was then pouring more violently than ever; but I resisted all their arguments, resolving to abide by the promise I made you in my letter of yesterday, of being with you by Thursday at latest: at that very instant, in came M. de Grignan in his night-gown and slippers, and talked to me very gravely of the rashness of such an undertaking, saying that the muleteer would not be able to follow the litter; that my mules would fall into some ditch on the road; that my people would be so wet and fatigued, that they would not be able to lend me assistance; so that I changed my mind in a moment, and yielded to his sage remonstrances: and now, my dear child, the trunks are brought back, the mules are unharnessed, the footmen and maids are drying themselves by the fire, for they were wet through in only crossing the court-yard; and I dispatch you this messenger, knowing your goodness will make you uneasy, and wishing to lessen my own uneasiness, being very anxious about your health; for this man will either bring me word here, or meet me on the road. In short, my dear, he will be with you at Grignan on Thursday instead of me; and I shall set out the first moment it pleases God and M. de Grignan, who is become absolute master of me, and well knows my reasons for wishing so much to be at Grignan. I should be glad if this affair could be kept a secret from M. de La Garde, for he will take a most unmerciful pleasure in finding everything turn out as he foretold; but let him take care, and not grow vain upon this pretended gift of propheey.

Adieu, my dearest child; do not expect me; I will come and surprise you. Believe me, it is much against my will that I am detained prisoner at Lambesc: but who could foresee such dreadful rains as have not been known in Provence for the last century?

LETTER 234

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Lyons, August 1, 1672.

I have received your two letters, my lovely friend, and return you a thousand thanks for thinking of me in the place where you are. The weather is dreadfully hot; I have no hope but from its violence [1]. I long to be at Grignan; after this month, it will be out of the question; so you may depend on it I will come, if I am alive.

The poor Marquis de Villeroi daily regrets his misfortune in not having seen you. We have the violins every evening in Belle Cour [2]. I am seldom there, being obliged to be a good deal with my mother. You must know I discharge my duty to a miracle, in the hope of getting to Grignan: this idea puts me in good humour. But we have had strange alterations here. Do you remember the figure Madame Solus made while you were here? She has imprudently taken a fancy to Madame Carle. The latter, it is said, had her views in encouraging it; for my part, I do not believe a syllable of the matter; however, it is the talk of Lyons. In short, it has come out, that it is Madame Carle with whom the Marquis is in love. Madame Solus is in despair; but she had rather see the Marquis, faithless as he is, than not see him at all: so that it is thought there is no danger of her throwing herself into a convent. What think you of this story? does it not carry an air of novelty with it?

Adieu, my dearest friend. I forgot to tell you, that the Marquis de Villeroi intends to visit Grignan, with your friend the Comte de Rochebonne. I am extremely obliged to you for wishing me with you: there are few things I more earnestly desire than to see your Castle as

[1] Agreeably to the proverb, "Whatever is violent seldom lasts long."

[2] A public place in the city of Lyons.

soon as possible. My patience, *though violent,* still continues; I hope the heat will not do so: it must be great indeed to prevent my setting out. The rapidity of the Rhône accords with the desire I have of embracing you; and so, my dear friend, I do not despair of relating to you in person all the diversions of Belle Cour. You have promised not to say to me, *Allez, allez, vous êtes une laide* [1]; and that is enough for me. I am afraid you will use our Governor ill: your manners have always appeared to me somewhat different from Madame Solus's. You know it has been reported at Paris that she and Vardes met: guess in what place.

LETTER 235

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Lyons, September 11, 1672.

I am rejoiced, my dear friend, to find that I have reason to believe you regret my absence; and what confirms the belief to me, is the uneasiness I feel at being no longer with you [2]. I have made your compliments to the *charmer* [3], which he received very properly. I am satisfied with him. Pray send Corbinelli to me; his apartment is quite ready, and I expect him with an impatience that claims this little journey of him: all our beauties too expect him, and will not set out for the country till he comes. If he abuses my credulity, and all this turns out to be a mere project, I shall break with him for ever. Adieu, my dear friend; I have a little business with the Comtesse de Grignan.

[1] Begone, begone, you are hideous. [Translation.]

[2] Madame de Coulanges had made a journey to Grignan to see Madame de Sévigné and her daughter, and this letter appears to be written soon after her return.

[3] This was a name given to François de Neuville, Marquis, afterwards Due de Villeroi, Peer and Maréchal of France.

Madame DE COULANGES *writes to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.
(*Enclosed with her Letter to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.)

I have no longer any taste for working, Madame; it is only at Grignan that I can work. The *charmer* and I, indeed, began a work two days ago, in which you had a considerable share. I assure you, if you were here, you would find me a great workwoman at present. I had fancied the *charmer* was to send you some patterns; but report says, you never work from patterns yourself, and that those you give are inimitable. Adieu, dear Madame; I find it very easy to divest myself of all form when I write to you.

LETTER 236

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Lyons, October 30, 1672.

I am very uneasy about you, my charming friend; will you never leave off this strange notion of your being so robust? Surely it was not a time to think so after having just been bled. I am impatient to hear from you, and yet it will be long before I can have that satisfaction. Alas! this is a farewell letter, my dearest friend; I am going to take a journey that will carry me more than a hundred leagues from you! What folly! Since the day has been fixed for my departure for Paris, I am almost distracted to think of what I must leave behind me: I leave my family, my poor afflicted family; and yet I must set out on All-Saints' day for Bagnols, from thence to Rouen, and then *vogue la galère,* happen what will.

Are you not charmed with the present the King has made M. de Marsillac[1]? Are you not delighted with the letter he wrote to him? I am now in the twentieth book of Ariosto, and am in raptures with it. Let me tell you,

[1] Of the office of Grand-Master of the Wardrobe.

without intending to abuse your credulity, that if I were received into your party at Grignan, I could much better dispense with Paris and its diversions, than in Paris I can dispense with you. But, my true friend, I must bid you adieu. I shall keep the *charmer* for the fair Comtesse.

Come, my dear confidant [1], come hither, and let me take my leave of you; I cannot be happy that I did not see you; it is of little avail to reflect on the pain it would have given me to part with you again; I had rather have undergone that, than the vexation of not having had an opportunity of convincing you of my sentiments towards you. I am delighted with M. de Grignan's talent for mimicry; this talent is necessary to represent probability. Adieu, my dear Sir; though you promise to be my confidant, I grieve that I am not worthy to accept your offer; but come, and take your denial at Paris. Adieu, my friend; adieu, my lady Comtesse [2]; adieu, M. Corbinelli; I have the pleasure of being with you in imagination, however distant from you in reality; but, alas! I feel lively sorrow at the certainty of not finding either of you where I am going.

I will not omit to tell you, that I am so much pleased with the Abbacy the King has bestowed on the Coadjutor, that I think it is uncivil not to compliment me upon the occasion.

LETTER 237

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, December 26, 1672.

The siege of Charleroi [3] is at length raised: I shall not inform you of the particulars of this affair, as I know Mademoiselle de Méri has sent Madame de Grignan a

[1] This is addressed to M. Corbinelli.

[2] Madame de Sévigné.

[3] The Prince of Orange was obliged to raise the siege of Charleroi the 22nd of December.

full account of it. It is not yet known what route His Majesty will take; some say he will return directly to St.-Germain; others that he will go into Flanders; we shall soon, however, be informed of his march. I can affirm, with truth, that I have the first intelligence; for the couriers all stop at M. Le Tellier's [1], where I spend the greatest part of my time; he is indisposed, and seems to take pleasure in having me with him; this is sufficient to make me diligent in my attendance on him.

I cannot conceive by what accident you missed receiving M. de Coulanges's letter, in which I had enclosed one from myself. The loss indeed is not great, but yet I flatter myself you regretted it, because I love you, my dearest friend; and I know you are not ungrateful.

I have been at mass at midnight, and have eaten supper afterwards. I am in such robust health at present, as to be a match for you. I have paid some visits in company with Madame de La Fayette; I am delighted with her, and I think she contrives to bear with me. Madame de Richelieu is here yet; I shall sup with her to-night at Madame Dufresnoi's. The latter is in great esteem at Court; nothing of consequence passes in the State without her having a share in it. The life Madame Scarron leads surprises every one; not a creature without exception has any intercourse with her. I have received a letter from her, but am very cautious of mentioning it, lest I should draw a torrent of impertinent questions upon me. The rendezvous of the beau monde is held every evening at the Maréchal d'Estrées'. Manicamp and his two sisters are excellent company. Madame de Senneterre sometimes joins the party, but always like the figure of Andromache: her grief is become troublesome; I cannot help thinking she likes it better than she did her husband: this reason ought perhaps to make her forget her affliction: but I believe her to be in earnest, and therefore pity her. The Dauphin's gendarmes are in the army of the Prince: it

[1] Madame de Coulanges was niece of M. Le Tellier, who was afterwards Chancellor of France.

is to be hoped they will soon be put into winter quarters, and that they will have a little time to arrange their affairs: I know some persons who are overwhelmed with them. Well, I must take my leave of you, my dearest, to prepare for the important occasion of the night. I assure you we must be very attentive to our dress when we sup with Madame Dufresnoi. Permit me to make my compliments to Madame de Grignan; it should be my love, but you will not suffer that.

The Princesse d'Harcourt has appeared at Court without rouge, from pure devotion: this is a novelty which effaces every other, and it may be called a great sacrifice. Brancas [1] is delighted at it. He adores you, my friend; do not find fault with him, therefore, for censuring the pleasure you enjoy without him: it is jealousy that leads him to it, but you will not have jealousy except from those of whom you can be jealous: pity poor Brancas.

LETTER 238

From Madame DE LA FAYETTE *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, December 30, 1672.

I have seen your long letter to d'Hacqueville; I perfectly understand all you say respecting the Bishop [2]. I am convinced he is in fault, since you complain of him. I shall show your letter to Langlade, and have a great desire Madame du Plessis should see it too, for she is very much prejudiced in favour of the Bishop. The Provençals, you know, are strange people.

I send you a packet for Lady Northumberland. You will not easily guess how I came to have charge of it: it comes from the Earl of Sunderland, the English Ambas-

[1] Charles de Brancas, father of the Princesse d'Harcourt, and Knight of Honour of Queen Anne of Austria.

[2] Of Marseilles.

sador; he has written to her several times, but having received no answer, is apprehensive that his letters are intercepted; and M. de La Rochefoucauld, whom he frequently visits, has taken upon him the conveyance of the packet in question: I must, therefore, beg the favour of you, as you are no longer at Aix, to send it by some person you can trust, and at the same time to write to Lady Northumberland, desiring her to inform you whether she has received it safely, and to consign her reply to the letter in a packet to your care. It is said Lord Montagu's journey has not succeeded as he could have wished, so that he will proceed to Italy, to show the world that Lady Northumberland's fine eyes were not the only motives that induced him to travel. Pray, let us know what you perceive of this affair, and how you think it will end.

La Marans is fallen into a state of devotion, penitence, and meekness of spirit, that is almost inconceivable: her sister, though not much attached to her, is surprised and charmed at it. Her person is so altered, you would scarcely recognize her; she looks as if she were sixty years of age. She was very angry with her sister for having told me what she said to her about M. de Longueville's child, and complained of me for having made it public: but her complaints were so gentle, that Montalais was embarrassed both for herself and for me; and to excuse me in some way, she told her that I was acquainted with the strange opinion she had entertained of my being in love with M. de Longueville. La Marans replied very justly, that if I were really acquainted with it, she was surprised I had not said much more, and that she thought I had the most reason to complain. Madame de Grignan was mentioned; she said a great many handsome things of her, and without the least affectation. She no longer suffers any one to come near her; if God confirms this happy disposition in her, it will be one of the greatest miracles I have ever seen.

I went yesterday to the Palais Royal with Madame de Monaco, where I caught a dreadful cold. I shed many

tears of real sorrow to the memory of MADAME [1]. I was greatly surprised at the wit of the present one [2]; not so much for the sprightliness of her humour as for the good sense. She was rallying the ridiculous conduct of M. de Meckelbourg, in being in Paris at such a time as this; and I assure you no one could have expressed what she said better than she did. She is very obstinate and determined, and is certainly a person of discernment, for she cannot bear Madame de Gourdon. MONSIEUR paid me all the attentions possible just under the nose of Madame de Clérembault [3]; however, I was kept in countenance by La Fienne, who mortally hates her, and whom I had invited to dine with me two days before. It is generally believed that the Comtesse du Plessis [4] is going to be married to young Clérembault.

M. de La Rochefoucauld sends you a thousand compliments. He has been kept at home these four or five days, having the gout in miniature. I have told Madame du Plessis that you write me wonders of her son. Adieu, my sweet friend; you know how much I love you.

LETTER 239

From M. LE DUC DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, February 9, 1673.

You cannot conceive the pleasure you gave me by the most entertaining letter that was ever written: it has

[1] Henrietta Anne of England, who died June 29, 1670.

[2] Elisabeth-Charlotte, Princess Palatine of the Rhine, whom Monsieur, only brother of Louis XIV., took for his second wife the 21st of November, 1671.

[3] Governess to the children of Monsieur.

[4] Marie-Louise Le Loup de Bellenave, relict of Alexandre de Choiseul, Comte du Plessis, married a second time to René Gillier de Puygarreau, Marquis de Clérembault, and first Gentleman of the Horse to the Duchesse d'Orléans.

been read with all the admiration you could desire. I shall find it a difficult task to acquit myself so well of the obligation; however, I will do my endeavours, but without the hope of succeeding by any charges with respect to your health, for you are so fortunate as to stand in no need of my prescriptions.

The Comtesse de La Fayette is gone this morning to St.-Germain, to thank the King, for a pension of five hundred crowns that he has granted her on an Abbey, and which in time will be worth a thousand to her; for it is upon a man who has the same pension on the Abbey of La Fayette, so that they are quit for the present; but upon the death of the former, the pension remains on his Abbey: His Majesty accompanied this gift with so many kind expressions, that it gives us reason to think he intends to confer still greater favours on her. If I am the first to acquaint you with this piece of news, I think I have half repaid M. de Coulanges's letter; but who can repay us for the weary moments we pass in your absence? The loss is so great to me, that nothing but your presence can make up for it: but you are not very ready at paying such debts. These are not the first I have lost by you; and being an old creditor, exposes me the more to these bankruptcies. The affair between the Chevalier de Lorraine and M. de Rohan has terminated happily; the King gave them credit for their intentions, and there is no room for any one to be offended. The Duc is returned. The Prince is to follow in two or three days. We live in hopes of peace; but, alas! you do not return, and that is enough to destroy all hope.

Notwithstanding what you tell me of Madame de Grignan, I cannot believe she often thinks of me. I return her or you, however, my most humble thanks, for what you are pleased to say to me from her. My *mother*[1] is become a perfect mirror of devotion; she has composed a hymn for her enemies, in which the *Queen of Provence*[2]

[1] Madame de Marans, whom M. de La Rochefoucauld always called his mother.

[2] Madame de Grignan, whom Madame de Marans hated.

is not forgotten. Embrace the Abbé [1] for me; tell him that, next to the Marquis de Villeroi, I stand better than any one in the good graces of M. de Coulanges.

If you have any news of our poor Corbinelli, I beseech you to let me know it. I was thinking to strike out the epithet, but I learn, to the eternal shame of our friends, that he has but too good a title to it.

From Madame DE LA FAYETTE *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.
(*Enclosed in M.* DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD'S *Letter.*)

This letter, my friend, will inform you of all I had to tell you. I am quite well after my trip to Saint-Germain. I saw your son, and treated him as well as if he had been my own: he is very handsome. Adieu.

LETTER 240

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, February 24, 1673.

If you were in a place where I could impart all my vexations to you, my dear and charming friend, I am persuaded they would be at an end. When I reflect, that the return of Madame de Grignan depends entirely on peace, as your return depends on her, can I do otherwise than long for this happy event? Comte Tot passed the afternoon here; we talked much of you; he remembers all he has ever heard you say; judge then, if his memory does not render him an excellent companion.

I no longer think, my dear, of leaving St.-Germain. I met one of the Ladies of Honour [2] there, for whom I have a great affection, and who behaves in the kindest manner to me. I seldom see the Queen: I sleep at Madame Dufresnoi's in a delightful apartment; which determines

[1] De Coulanges.

[2] Madame de Richelieu.

me to make frequent excursions thither. Our poor friends are gone again, that is, M. de La Trousse [1], who has been ordered, with Vaubrun, into Franche-Comté, on the King's having received news of an insurrection there. He has appointed them to the command, being unwilling to suffer the Spaniards to send troops through his dominions. La Trousse is not easily reconciled to the honour conferred on him, though doubtless it is one that could not fail of being agreeable to a person less wearied with travelling than he is. The guidon [2] continues with us. I took him with me the other day, to dine with Madame de Richelieu: he is almost as much beloved by every one as by me. *Mithridate* [3] is a charming piece: it affects you to tears, and calls forth continual admiration; you see it twenty times, and like it better the twentieth time than you did the first. *Pulchére* did not meet with the same success.

Our friend Brancas has a fever, and a defluxion on the breast; I shall see him to-morrow. I have not seen your Cardinal [4] yet, though I have always wished to do it; but something or other has continually happened to prevent me. The Marquis de Villeroi is so much in love, that he sees only with other people's eyes; never surely was blindness equal to his; everybody pities him: in short, he is rather the *charmed* than the *charmer*. He sets no value upon his fortune; but his fair one sets some value upon Caderousse, and upon one more, and so on to two, three, this is absolute truth; you know I abhor scandal. I embrace Madame de Grignan; I heartily wish she were safely brought to bed, and as heartily wish she would never be with child again: and, lastly, that she would come hither, and put every one out of countenance who is now the object of admiration.

[1] Captain in the Dauphin's gen d'armes.

[2] M. de Sévigné, who was guidon, or cornet, in the Dauphin's gen d'armes.

[3] A tragedy of Racine's, which was represented for the first time in January, 1673.

[4] De Retz.

My ever dear friend, farewell! *your little heart*[1] is very well; it is very saucy; it has had its hair cut, and is dressed very prettily.

Madame Scarron never appears now; I am extremely sorry for it, for I have no one here this year that I love. The Abbé Têtu and I are compelled to love one another. Mademoiselle dreamt you were very ill, and awoke crying; she desires me to tell you so.

LETTER 241

From Madame de La Fayette *to Madame* de Sévigné.

Paris, February 27, 1673.

M. de Bayard, and M. de La Fayette, are this moment arrived; so, my dear friend, I have only time to say two words to you about your son: he is just gone from hence, and desired me at parting to let you know his reasons for wanting a supply of cash. They are so very good, that I need not take much time to explain them to you at large. In a word, you see what expense you are to expect from a campaign that is likely never to have an end. Every creature is in despair, and running to ruin, and it is impossible but your son must do like the rest; besides, the great love you have for Madame de Grignan will not suffer you to neglect her brother: but I leave the great d'Hacqueville to tell you more on this subject, and bid you for this time heartily farewell.

LETTER 242

From Madame de Coulanges *to Madame* de Sévigné.

Paris, March 20, 1673.

I wish your reproaches too much to deserve them; no, my beauty, exaggeration does not bear me away: I tell

[1] A name given by Madame de Sévigné to her little granddaughter, who was born the 15th of November, 1670.

you I love you, because I feel truly that I do; and my affection is even stronger than my expressions. We have, at last, found our friend Madame Scarron, in other words, we know where she is; for as to having any intercourse with her, that is not quite so easy. A certain gentleman (M. de Coulanges) who visits at the house of one of her friends, thinks her so amiable, and such excellent company, that he cannot bear to be absent from her. She is more solicitous about her old friends than ever; and obliges them so freely with all the time she has to spare, that they regret she has not more to bestow on them. I am certain you think the pension of two thousand crowns very moderate; it is so; but then the way in which it was bestowed, gives reason to hope for something better hereafter. The King had been looking over the pension-list, and finding Madame Scarron down for two thousand francs, he struck out that sum, and in its place put two thousand crowns.

Everybody imagined we should have peace: but then the hopes of everybody are again destroyed by a word that escaped the King, that, peace or war, he would not return to Paris till the month of October. I have just received a letter from the young guidon [1], in which he desires me [2] to procure him his discharge; and his reasons are so good, that I do not doubt I shall obtain it for him. I have seen an excellent letter of yours to M. de Coulanges: it is so replete with good sense and good reasoning, that I am persuaded it would be a bad undertaking for anyone who should attempt to answer it. I promised Madame de La Fayette yesterday that she should see it: I found her tête-à-tête with a personage called M. le Duc: they regretted your departure from Paris, and wished you back again; but, alas! how fruitless are wishes, and yet we cannot help forming them. M. de Grignan is not at all rusticated by Provence; he has a very good air at Court, but he finds something wanting; we are of the same opinion, and think

[1] M. de Sévigné.

[2] Madame de Coulanges was cousine-germaine to Louvois, the Secretary of War.

something is wanting to him. I have informed M. de La Trousse of what you write me of him: if my letter reach him, he will no doubt thank you: I believe the wonderful secret he possessed of making as great a show as the richest among us, has failed him on this occasion: he appears to me overwhelmed without resource.

Madame Dufresnoi makes such a figure as would surprise you: she has eclipsed Mademoiselle de S**** without mercy: who hearing the beauty of her rival so amazingly cried up, has never shown her face abroad. She is certainly a very fine and regular beauty, has an admirable complexion; but then she is bashful, though she does not like it to appear: she is always laughing, but it is with an ill grace. MADAME will never want a succession of new beauties at her Court: the least shadow of gallantry makes her immediately part with her Maids of Honour. I fancy those who stay with her think themselves worse off than those who have left her. Mademoiselle de Laval is on the point of leaving her: Madame de Richelieu desires me to make you many compliments in her name. Adieu, my lovely friend; with your permission and her own, I take the liberty of embracing the Comtesse de Grignan: is she not brought to bed yet? M. de Coulanges has promised me to send you *Mithridate*. I am to sit to-day for my portrait, for M. de Grignan: for my part, I had given over all thoughts of such sittings.

The *charmer's* story is really very pitiable; I know it all; *Orondate*[1] was nothing to him: he is the only one in the world that truly knows how to love: he is certainly the most deserving of men, and his *Alcine* the most unworthy of women.

[1] The hero of a romance.

LETTER 243

From Madame DE COULANGES *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, April 10, 1673.

It is now midnight, which is a reason for my not writing to you: I am vexed to the heart: I had resolved to answer your delightful letter, but was prevented thus. M. de La Rochefoucauld spent the whole day with me: I introduced him to Madame Dufresnoi, and he was quite charmed with her. I am extremely glad to hear Madame de Grignan suffers now only from lassitude: the uneasiness I felt on account of her disorder, has made it the greatest joy to hear of her recovery: it is truly barbarous to wish her children.

But I must not forget what happened to me this morning: a footman wanted to speak with me from Madame de Thianges. What d'ye think was his message? "Madame," says he, "I come from Madame de Thianges, who begs the favour of you to send her the letter about Madame de Sévigné's horse, and that about the meadow." I told him I would bring them myself to his mistress, and so I got rid of him. Your letters have all the reputation they merit, as you may see. They are certainly very charming; and you are no less so than your letters. Adieu, my dearest friend: I embrace the Comtesse gently, for fear of hurting her. My wishes are stronger than my hopes, that she may never be exposed to former accidents. The King said yesterday, that he would set out on the twenty-fifth, without fail.

LETTER 244

From Madame DE LA FAYETTE *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, April 15, 1673.

Lady Northumberland called upon me yesterday; I had been to see her with Madame de Coulanges. She seems to me to have been a very handsome woman; but there is not a feature of beauty remaining in her face, nor the slightest appearance of youth, at which I am greatly surprised: add to this, that she dresses badly, and without the least taste. In short, I was not at all captivated with her. She seemed to understand everything that was said to her; or rather that I said to her; for M. de La Rochefoucauld and Madame de Thianges, who had a great desire to see her, did not come in till she was going. Montagu sent me word he would be with us: I have talked a great deal to him about her: he has declared himself her humble servant, without the least reserve. M. de Chaulnes set out yesterday, as did Comte Tot; the latter greatly mortified at being obliged to quit France. I have seen him almost every day since he has been here: we have had several conversations, of which your ladyship was the subject.

The Maréchale de Gramont is ill. Our friend d'Hacqueville has been two or three times backward and forward, to carry her medicine: he is in reality a little too abundant in his attentions.

Adieu, my dear friend. My blood is so heated, and I am so much out of sorts with the bustle and noise I have had to encounter, for the last two or three days, that I am perfectly exhausted. I long to see you, to cool my blood. Adieu.

LETTER 245

From Madame DE LA FAYETTE *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, May 19, 1673.

I shall go to-morrow to Chantilly. This is the same journey which I began last year, when the fever seized me at Pont-Neuf [1]. I know not whether anything will happen to hinder my completing it again. We shall be the same party as then, and no more.

Madame du Plessis was so charmed with your letter, that she sent it to me for my perusal. She is set out for Brittany at last. I have given your letters to Langlade, who seemed highly pleased with them: he always expresses great esteem for Madame de Grignan. Montagu is going. It is said, that he will find all his hopes baffled. I have a notion there is something a little wrong in the mind of the nymph [2].

Your son is desperately in love with Mademoiselle de Poussai. He wishes only to be as mad as La Fare. M. de La Rochefoucauld says, that it would be his greatest ambition to die for love that he did not feel; for you must know, we none of us consider him made of the wood by which the strong passions are kindled. I am quite disgusted with La Fare's love; it is beyond all bounds, and makes him a perfect slave: his mistress does not return his sentiment for her in the slightest degree. She went to a ball and supper at Longueil's the very night he set off. Now to go to a public entertainment the night a lover departs, and for the army too, appears to me an unpardonable crime; I may however be mistaken. Adieu, my dear.

[1] A bridge in Paris over the river Seine.

[2] Lady Northumberland.

LETTER 246

From Madame DE LA FAYETTE *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, May 26, 1673.

If I had not the headache, my dear, I would give you an account of my journey to Chantilly, and tell you that no place under the sun is equal to it. The weather was not very favourable, indeed, while we were there; but then the pleasures of the chase, which we followed in our carriages, fully made up for it. We stayed there nearly a week, and wished you had been with us, not so much on account of our friendship for you, as from knowing how much you would have admired and enjoyed the beauties of the place. On my return, I found two letters from you. I could not get mine finished on Friday, nor shall I be able to finish it to-day, which vexes me, because it seems so long since I had the pleasure of chatting with you.

In answer to your questions, I have to inform you, that Madame de Brissac [1] is still at the Conti Mansion attended by very few lovers, and those not at all calculated to make much noise, so that she does not stand much in need of Saint-Ursula's cloak. The first President of Bordeaux is passionately in love with her: you know his head is but indifferently furnished. M. le Premier and his children are also very attentive to her. Lord Montagu has not, I think, seen her this trip, for fear of displeasing Lady Northumberland, who sets off to-day. Montagu has been gone these two days; so that, all things considered, there seems no reason to doubt that they will soon be married. Madame de Brissac still continues to act the woe-begone, and affects a great negligence of her person. The Comtesse du Plessis went into waiting as Lady of Honour only two days before the departure of MONSIEUR;

[1] Gabrielle-Louise de Saint Simon, Duchesse de Brissac.

her mother-in-law [1] could never be brought to consent to it before. She does not elbow Madame de Monaco; I suppose she thinks as she ought to do, that the second place about MADAME is certainly good enough for the wife of Clérembault; which she will doubtless be shortly, if she is not already.

M. de La Rochefoucauld, Morangis, Coulanges, and I, are going to dine at Livry. There is something very odd to me in dining at Livry without you. The Abbé Têtu is gone to Fontevrault; I am mistaken, however, if it would not have been better for him to have stayed away, and if this journey will not displease some folks, whom he had better not displease.

It is said that Madame de Montespan is left at Courtray. I have had the pleasure of a short letter from you: if you have not received any from me, it is solely on account of the bustle I have been in: I would tell you all my reasons if you were here. The Duc finds time very heavy upon his hands at Utrecht. The women of that country are hideous. The following story is told of him. It seems he was taking liberties one day with a young woman of that place, I suppose by way of amusing himself; but as his freedoms went rather too far, she said to him, "Upon my soul, Monseigneur, Your Highness is pleased to be rather too insolent." I had this from Briole. I thought you would be as much pleased with it as I was. Adieu, my charming friend: I am truly yours.

LETTER 247

From Madame DE LA FAYETTE *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, June 30, 1673.

Well, well, my dear; what reason is there for all this outcry? I desired you to suspend judgment till you came

[1] Colombe Le Charron, wife of César, Duc de Choiseul, Peer and Maréchal of France, and first Lady of Honour to Madame d'Orléans.

here; and pray what is there so very terrible in these words? My days are wholly occupied; I have scarcely an hour to myself. It is true, Bayard is here, and takes a great deal of business off my hands: but when he has been running about all day in my service, can I write? I must talk a little to him. When I have been running about all day myself, and come back, I find M. de La Rochefoucauld, whom I have not seen during the day: can I write? Perhaps he and Gourville are with me: can I write? "But when they are gone." Oh! when they are gone, it is almost twelve o'clock; and then I have to go out, for I sleep at a neighbour's at present, because they are building just opposite my chamber-window. "But in the afternoon." Why, in the afternoon I have the headache. "In the morning then." Why, in the morning I am still worse, and take herb tea that intoxicates me. You are in Provence, my dear friend, your time is your own; and what is more, your head is clear. You love writing; I hate it; and if I had a lover who expected a note from me every morning, I should certainly break with him. Let me beg you then not to measure my friendship by my writing; I shall love you as well, though I write you but a page in a month, as you love me in writing to me ten times in a week. When I am at St.-Maur [1], I shall be better able to write; for my head and hands will be more at liberty: but I have no time to go there. I have spent but a week there all this year, though Paris destroys me. If you knew how much I might make my court to some people, with whom it is very necessary to keep well, by sending them now and then a little nonsense, and how negligent I am in this respect, you would readily own that I have it not in my power to do as I would in this respect.

This very day three years I saw poor MADAME expire. I have been reading over some of her letters: in

[1] She occupied a part of the Castle. Gourville, who lent her the apartment, states in his Memoirs, as much to her discredit as it appears to be true, that she endeavoured to keep possession of it in spite of him, and that she exerted herself, when she was obliged to give it up, to ruin him with M. de La Rochefoucauld.

short, I can think of nothing but of her. Adieu, my dearest friend; you have but one fault, and that is your distrust of your friends; it is the only thing that I dislike in you. M. de La Rochefoucauld will write to you.

LETTER 248

From Madame DE LA FAYETTE *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Paris, Wednesday, July 14, 1673.

I give you here a true account of all that has happened to me since I wrote to you. In the first place I have had two fits of my ague. It is above six months since I took medicine. Well, they gave me two doses. The day after the second dose, as I took my seat at the dinner-table, I felt myself on a sudden very unwell. I can eat no soup, said I.—Well then, eat a little meat.—No, I do not choose any.—Then you will eat some fruit.—Perhaps I may.—Why don't you then?—I cannot at present, I may by and by; let me have some broth and some chicken for supper.—Night came, and up came the broth and the chicken:—Take it away, I cannot touch it; the sight of food makes me sick; I'll go to bed; I have more inclination to sleep than to eat.—Well, to bed I went; I turned first on one side, then on the other; I was not ill, but I could not sleep: I rang the bell, called for a light, took a book, and read a little, then laid it down again; at length daylight appeared; I got up, put on my clothes, and went to the window: four o'clock, five o'clock, six o'clock struck; I went to bed again, slept till seven, rose at eight. At noon I sat down to table, but to no purpose: in the evening I went to bed, as I did the night before, but to no purpose. Are you ill?—No.—Are you faint?—No.—In this state I continued for three days and three nights. I have recovered my sleep a little, but not my appetite; I eat only by artifice, as they

make horses do, by rubbing my mouth with vinegar: in other respects I am well, and my headache is better than usual.

I have just been writing nonsense to Monsieur le Duc. If I am able, I intend to go next Sunday to Livry for a day or two. I am ready to love Madame de Coulanges for your sake. Are you resolved, my dear, to oblige me to use my rhetoric to maintain, that my love for you is greater than yours for me? I would make Corbinelli own it in a quarter of an hour. Pray let me hear something about him. Are all our good wishes for this poor man to be of no avail? It is my opinion that he owes all his ill-fortune to his merit. Segrais is one of those too who carry their ill-luck about with them. Madame de Thianges has a great friendship for Corbinelli, so has Madame Scarron, so have a thousand people besides, and yet he does not seem to have the least shadow of hope of getting anything done for him: pensions are given to men of wit and learning: it is a fund appropriated to them alone: he has a better title than any of them, and yet no news, nothing can be obtained for him.

I am to see Madame de Vill*** to-morrow. She is a ridiculous creature, and has had a child by M. d'Ambres, for which she has sued him, and lost her cause. She tells everybody her adventure, with all its circumstances; she pretends he used violence; you may suppose this leads to some very entertaining particulars. La Marans is a perfect saint: I am not jesting: this is to me a miracle. La Bonnetot is become religious too; she has thrown away her glass eye, and left off *rouge* and curls. Madame de Monaco does not follow her example: she is become a favourite of this MADAME as she was of the other. This is odd enough. Langlade sets out to-morrow for Poitou, where he is to stay for two or three months. M. de Marsillac is here; he goes on Monday to Barrège: he has not the use of his arm yet. The Comtesse du Plessis is going to be married. Her ladyship has some thoughts of purchasing Frêne. M. de La Rochefoucauld is well, and sends a thousand and a

thousand good wishes to you and Corbinelli. I give you a question to solve between two maxims [1].

> We may forgive a breach of faith, but we cannot forget it:
> We may forget a breach of faith, but we cannot forgive it.

"Had you rather be unfaithful to your lover, and yet continue to love him; or that your lover should be unfaithful to you, and yet continue to love you?" Observe that "unfaithful" does not mean to leave one lover for another, but to have committed some great fault against him. Adieu, you see I am got into a train of talking: this is the effect of not eating or sleeping. I embrace Madame de Grignan, and all her perfections.

*LETTER 249

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Grignan, July 15, 1673.

You see plainly, my dear cousin, that I am at Grignan. I have been here exactly a year: I wrote you conjointly with our friend Corbinelli, who spent two months with us, since which time I have taken a walk into Provence. I passed the winter at Aix with my daughter. She was very near death at her lying-in, and I equally near death at seeing her in so much danger. We returned here a fortnight ago: I shall remain here till September, when I mean to go to Bourbilly, where I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you. Arrange matters for this purpose immediately, that you may not be at Dijon. I wish also to see our great cousin de Toulongeon there: tell him

[1] The manner in which the words and the sense are here played upon, seems to justify a critique that has been made on Rochefoucauld's *Maxims*: "In many articles, the expression has not been invented by the accusation, but the accusation has been invented to introduce the expression." Huet, who says this, knew the author of the *Maxims* better than any one, his method, and the charms of his society.

so. I shall perhaps bring our dear friend Corbinelli with me. He came here to meet me, and we resolved to write to you as soon as I received your letter. With respect to manners, you will find him just the same as ever; but he knows his religious duties better than he did, and his punishment will be the greater, if he does not profit by his knowledge. I still love him; his turn of mind is exactly calculated to please me. What say you to the conquest of Maëstricht? The King alone has the glory of it. Your misfortunes affect me so painfully, that they make me feel how much I love you. I resign the pen to our friend. We should be too happy if we could have him with us at our delightful Castle of Bourbilly. My daughter sends her love to you, though you did not remember her.

M. DE CORBINELLI *writes to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *Letter.*)

It is very necessary, Sir, that the report of my devotion should continue: the contrary report has so long prevailed, that the change would perhaps favourably affect my fortune. This devout turn is ascribed to me merely because I am convinced that both the happiness and misery of mankind is the pure effect of Providence, without fortune having any share in it. I express myself so often in these terms, that they have been taken for the sentiment of a true Christian, though it is only that of a true philosopher. But even if the report which has prevailed were true, my devotion would not have been incompatible with my perseverance in honouring you, and often expressing to you the same sentiments which I have felt for you all my life. You know how proud I have always been of your friendship, and can judge whether saving grace could destroy so rational a feeling. We wrote a long letter to you on our first journey here, and have talked twenty times of your indolence. But does it extend so far as to lead you not to regret that you were not at Maëstricht killing the Dutch and Spaniards in sight of the King?

What say you? The poets are going to write wonders on the occasion, and the subject is ample and grand. They will say that their august sovereign conquered Holland and Spain in twelve days, by taking Maëstricht[1], and nothing will be wanting to his glory but the truth. They will say he is himself the destroyer of his renown, by rendering it incredible, and a thousand other things which do not occur to me, because I have at best not a very flowery imagination, and the little I could boast has been rendered still more barren for the last twelvemonth by my devoting myself to the philosophy of Descartes. This philosophy appears to me the more noble, as it is easy, and admits nothing but bodies and motion in the world; never tolerating anything of which we have not clear and precise ideas. His metaphysics also please me; his principles are easy, and his inductions natural. Why do you not study this philosophy? It would highly amuse both you and your daughters. Madame de Grignan is perfect mistress of it, and reasons upon it divinely. She maintained the other day, that the more indifference there is in the soul, the less liberty it possesses. This proposition is very pleasingly supported by M. de La Forge, in a *Treatise on the Human Mind,* written in French, which I very much admire. Such studies as these would dissipate the dullness of the country. We read Tacitus all the winter at Montpellier, and I assure you we translated it very tolerably. I have written a treatise on Rhetoric, and a commentary on Horace's *Art of Poetry*[2]. Would to God you were here, for the Provençals have not understanding enough to satisfy us in our reflections. Let us hear from you sometimes, if you please, and be assured, that if I were in Paradise, I should not be less your obedient servant.

[1] The King took Maëstricht on 29th of June, 1673, after three days of siege.

[2] It is in this work, no doubt, that he gave the new explanation which drew upon him the ill-will of Boileau.

*LETTER 250

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Grignan, August 23, 1673.

I am very glad, my dear cousin, that you are at Paris. This appears to me to be the road to preferment, and I have never wished any one so much to obtain great honours as I wished them to you, when you were in the way of Fortune. She is so fantastic, that there is nothing we may not expect from her caprice; so I always live in hope. You have so much philosophy, that I shall some day ask you to impart a small portion to me, to help me to bear your misfortunes, and my own vexations. I comfort myself for not seeing you at Bourbilly, in the idea that we shall meet in Paris. I wish my daughter could pay her respects to you there herself, but as this is uncertain, she desires me to do it here, and so does M. de Grignan.

LETTER 251

From Madame DE LA FAYETTE *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

September 4, 1673.

I am now at St. Maur; I have left all my business and all my husbands; I have taken with me only fair weather and my children, which is as much as I want. I take care of my health, and drink the waters of Forges. I see nobody, but I do not mind that; every one seems so devoted to pleasures, and to pleasures that depend wholly upon other people, that I think it a gift of the fairies that I am as I am. I do not know whether Madame de Coulanges has informed you of a conversation that passed one afternoon at Gourville's, when Madame Scarron and the Abbé Têtu were there, about persons who have a taste above

or below their understandings. We ran into so many subtleties, that we were quite bewildered. If the air of Provence, which is so apt to subtilise everything, should so operate upon your mind with regard to these notions of ours, you will be quite in the clouds. "You have a taste above your understanding, and so has M. de La Rochefoucauld, and so have I, but less so than either of you." These are examples for your direction.

M. de Coulanges tells me your journey is put off again; provided you bring Madame de Grignan with you, I shall not complain of this; but if you do not, I shall think your absence too long. My liking increases rapidly for the Abbess of Calvaire: I hope she will make me good. Cardinal de Retz has gained my displeasure for ever, for having refused me permission to reside with her. I see her almost every day, and have at length seen her face [1]; it is pleasing, and has still the remains of beauty: she is only forty years of age, but the austerity of her order has very much changed her. M. de Grignan has done wonders in writing to La Marans; I was not so civil, for I went the other day to call on Madame de Schomberg [2], and did not even inquire for her. Adieu, my beauty, I long for your return with an impatience worthy of our friendship.

I received the five hundred livres some time ago. Now money is so scarce, it seems a shame to take it of our friends, so pray make my excuses to M. l'Abbé [3] for what I have received from him.

[1] The nuns of Calvaire always wear their veils down in the parlour, except with near relations, and in particular cases.

[2] Madame de Schomberg, and Madame de Marans, lodged in the same house.

[3] De Coulanges.

LETTER 252

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Montélimar, Thursday, October 5 [1], 1673.

This is a dreadful day, my dear child; I own I can scarcely support it. I have left you in a situation that adds to my sorrow. I think of every step I take, and every one you take; and that were we to continue travelling in this way, we should never meet again. My heart is truly at rest when I am near you: it is then in its natural state, and the only one in which it takes pleasure. What passed this morning has given me the most poignant uneasiness, and caused a tumult within me, which your philosophy will not be at a loss to account for. I have felt, and shall long feel it. My heart and mind are full of you; I cannot think of you without weeping, and I think of you incessantly. This state is not to be borne: as it is extreme, I hope its violence will destroy it. I seek you continually, and I seem to have lost everything in losing you. My eyes, that have so often for these fourteen months dwelt on you with delight, no longer behold you: the endearing time I have passed, renders the present more painful, till I am a little accustomed to it, but I shall never be sufficiently accustomed to it not to desire ardently to see and embrace you again. I have no reason to hope more from the future than the past. I know what I have already suffered by your absence: and I shall now be still more to be pitied, since I have imprudently made your presence necessary to me. It seems to me as if I did not embrace you sufficiently at parting; what was there to hinder me from doing it? I did not tell you how satisfied I am with your affection. I did not recommend you enough to M. de

[1] This was the day on which Madame de Sévigné left Grignan to set out for Paris, as did Madame de Grignan at the same time on her journey to Salon and Aix. Montélimar is only three or four leagues from the family-seat of Grignan.

Grignan; I did not thank him sufficiently for all his attentions and kindness to me; but I expect that he will continue to give me proofs of it on every occasion: there is one in which his own interest is more concerned than mine, and yet I am the person most affected by it.

I already begin to be devoured with expectation. I hope for no consolation but from your letters; and yet I know they will only make me sigh still more deeply. In short, my dear child, I live but for you. Would I loved God with equal fervour! I am continually thinking of the pigeons. I am made up of Grignans, and all that belongs to them. Never was journey so dull and melancholy as ours: not a word passes. Adieu, my dear child; pity me for being thus torn from you! Alas! here are we again at our letter-writing! Assure the Archbishop of my tenderest respect, and embrace the Coadjutor for me: I recommend you to his care. We have dined once more at your expense. But here comes M. de Saint Géniez to comfort me.

LETTER 253

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Valence, Friday, October 6, 1673.

My only pleasure consists in writing to you. The indolent Coadjutor is astonished that this can be an amusement. You are now at Salon, my poor child; you have passed the Durance, and I am arrived here. I examine all the roads you are to pass through this winter, and make my remarks upon such as appear the most dangerous. The safest way of travelling in the winter is in a litter; for there are some places where you must get out of your carriage, or have your neck broken. M. de Valence[1] sent me his carriage with Montreuil and Le Clair, that I might

[1] Daniel de Cosnac, Bishop of Valence, afterwards Archbishop of Aix.

travel more comfortably. I waited on him as soon as I arrived. We had a good deal of chat together: your merit and his misfortunes were the principal subjects of conversation: he seems a man of understanding. He has two female relations with him.

I paid a short visit to the Sisters of Sainte-Marie, and to your sister-in-law [1], her charming Abbess is dying; there is great interest made to succeed her. I supped at Le Clair's with Montreuil, where I lodge. M. de Valence and his two nieces came to see me, most fantastically dressed.

It is reported here that the King is gone to join the Prince: not a word now about peace. My heart beats violently, when I think you will perhaps not come to Paris. I *cook* [2] incessantly, and talk very little. As for our Abbé, you know he delights in nothing but *les beaux yeux de sa cassette* [3]. Oh! how I long to hear from you! it seems already an age since I saw you.

LETTER 254

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Lyons, Tuesday, October 10, 1673.

I am already, my child, at a dreadful distance from you. Oh! did you but know the grief the thought of it gives me! I was received at the Chamarier's [4] by himself and his sister: I found my heart much affected while I was embracing that lovely woman; she seemed no less so on her part. We talked a good deal. I immediately began to defend M. de Grignan's cause. The Chamarier did not

[1] Marie-Adhémar de Monteil, sister of M. de Grignan, one of the nuns at Aubenas.

[2] *Je cuis,* by this expression Madame de Sévigné means that she broods over her melancholy.

[3] *The beautiful eyes of his casket,* an expression of the miser in *L'Avare,* a comedy of Molière's.

[4] *Chamarier* is a dignity in the Cathedral Church of St. John of Lyons.

know the true state of the affair. It is the best in the world to defend, and can never suffer but by being ill explained, or misunderstood.

Let me tell you once more, that if you wish to avoid the dangers that will attend your journey this winter, you must get out of your carriage as often as I have done; but a litter would be better, and a horse better still. Mesdames de Verneuil and d'Arpajon have travelled in this way. M. de Verville's carriage broke down last year. There is another road too, which they made us take across the Rhône. I alighted, my horses swam over, and the water came in at the bottom of the coach: this place is about two leagues from Montélimar. When you come, the river will not be passable; so that you must go through some fields, and not venture the passage: I assure you the danger is more than imaginary. My affection and foresight oblige me to give you these precautions: you may laugh at them if you please, but I fancy M. de Grignan will not laugh at them. You will tell me, I suppose, that everything goes on as we could wish, that we are going to have a speedy peace, and then away for Paris! Very true: but even if war should be declared against Spain, it will be a work of time, and not likely to give any immediate employ to those who have governments. I think it would be good policy for M. de Grignan to come to Court, and the sooner the better. I expect letters from you this evening: when I have received them I shall close my packet.

Tuesday night.

I could not receive your letter without shedding a torrent of tears. I see you at Aix overwhelmed with melancholy, completely destroying your strength of body and mind. This thought breaks my heart: I think I see you fly from me; you disappear, and I behold you no more. I am aware of the dullness my departure must have occasioned you: you do not know what to do without me;

you have been accustomed to see me continually revolving round you. It is an addition to our grief to see the places again where we have been happy. True, I have never been in company with you on any of these roads; but when I passed them last, I was full of joy and transport at the thought of seeing and embracing you; now that I am on my return, I feel a deadly grief at my heart, and I envy my former feelings: how different are my present ones. I had hoped to bring you back with me; you know by what arguments and in what accents you cut short that hope. I could not but feel the force of your arguments, and admire you for them; but nothing in the world has so unnatural a look as to see me returning to Paris alone. If I were sure you would come to us this winter, I should be contented and happy; in that case I should only grieve for three months, agreeably to your desire: but I leave you; I am going still farther from you: all this I perceive, but I know nothing of the future. I have a continual desire to receive your letters; it is a melancholy pleasure, but I interest myself so warmly in everything you do, that I cannot live without knowing it. Do not forget your little cause, nor omit to count on your fingers the sheep of your flock; do not put the pot too soon over the fire, lest the contents boil away: the idea of an *oille* [1] pleases me, it is better than only one sort of meat: like you, I add but one thing to mine, which is bitter chicory; it must be good, however, for the health; for, except being so ugly that no one here knows me, I never was better in my life.

It was a great pleasure to me to embrace our dear Madame Rochebonne: I can endure nothing but what is Grignan. I shall answer our Mother of Sainte-Marie. I have spent the day with those of the society who are here. To-morrow I set out for Burgundy; here is another great satisfaction to me; I shall not receive any of your letters but by way of Paris; let them be directed to M. de Coulanges there, and he will take care and send them to me

[1] A sort of pottage or ragoût which was brought over from Spain, and is composed of a variety of herbs and meats.

at Bourbilly. Adieu, my ever amiable child: you would have me judge of your heart by my own; I do so, and therefore I both love and pity you.

LETTER 255

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

From a little miserable village, six leagues from Lyons, Wednesday evening, October 11, 1673.

I am just got to this place, which would make me melancholy if I were not so; there is nothing to be seen; it is a perfect desert: but I can write to you, and that is the only amusement I wish, when absent from you. Pray tell the Coadjutor, to rouse his jealousy a little, that Chamarande lives about a league from hence, that he is Lord of five or six parishes, and is waiting for His Majesty's return. I know a great deal more news, but I will not intrust you with it. I left Lyons this morning about eight o'clock, surrounded by all the Rochebonnes, whom I love and esteem highly. Monsieur de Rochebonne is going to pay a visit to his estates, and set everything in order to follow the army if called upon. It is impossible to travel more sorrowfully than I do. This is the fourth time I have written to you: without this consolation what would become of me? But the worst is, that after my first sleep, I hear the clock strike two, and, instead of going to sleep again, I put the pot on the fire with the bitter chicory, and it boils till daylight, when it is time to be in my carriage. I am certain that it is merely to make me happy respecting you, that you tell me the air of Aix has restored you, and that you are not so thin as when you were at Grignan. I will not believe a word of it, my poor child; every thing adds to my uneasiness: the noise of the streets, to which you are unaccustomed, and all the bustle I see: in short, I follow your every step; I see you go out, I see

you come in; I even see your thoughts; and when I am no longer occupied with every thing that concerns you, my heart will cease to beat.

We saw some excellent pictures at Lyons. I blame M. de Grignan for not accepting the one the Archbishop of Vienna would have made him a present of. The picture is of no use to him, and it is as fine a one as can be painted. I was so completely deceived, that I wanted to fasten up the canvas which I thought was unnailed. *Apropos,* the Archbishop is brother-in-law to Madame de Villars, and behaved with the greatest civility. Adieu, my dearest child; you write to me so affectionately, that you wound while you delight my heart.

*LETTER 256

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Châlons, Friday evening, October 13, 1673.

What a vexation to have no longer the hope of hearing from you! this circumstance augments my grief. I will not tell you, my child, all my wretchedness upon this subject; you would only laugh at me, and you know how much I prize your esteem. I honour therefore your strength of mind and your philosophy, and will only confide my weakness to those who are as weak as myself. I am going out of the high road, and shall no longer write to you so regularly: this is another of my griefs. When you do not receive my letters, be assured it has not been in my power to write to you; but with regard to thinking of you, I do nothing else: I *cook* incessantly, and you know how I amuse myself with picking the roots of my chicory, so that my soup is as bitter as what we used to take at Grignan.

The declamations of Quintilian have amused me; some are very fine, and others very poor. I am going to begin the *Christian Socrates.* I saw M. de Paule's son at Mâcon; I thought him handsome; he resembles the *charmer.* I

know of no news, except that Madame de Mazarin and her husband are in a perfect frenzy. The Duchess of York[1] is expected at Lyons: what a pleasure, that she is not thrown upon you! We met M. de Sainte-Marthe upon the road; he has promised to send you Marigny's[2] *Consecrated Bread and Funeral,* of which I have said so much to you; the *Funeral* always delights me; the *Consecrated Bread* wants too many explanations: if your mind is at ease when you receive this little work, and it is read to you well, you will like it much; but if you are not in good humour, it will be thrown away upon you, and despised: I find that the value of most things depends on the state we are in when we receive them. I embrace M. de Grignan affectionately; he ought to be convinced of my regard for him by my giving him my daughter and leaving her with him: all I ask him is to be careful of your heart and of mine: he knows the way. I shall esteem it a favour, if he obliges me to love him eternally. Chance made me mention him yesterday, as well as his noble and elegant manners, and his greatness of mind: I wished he had been behind me, and you also: you will readily believe this, my dear Comtesse.

[1] Marie d'Est, Princesse de Modène, afterwards Queen of England.

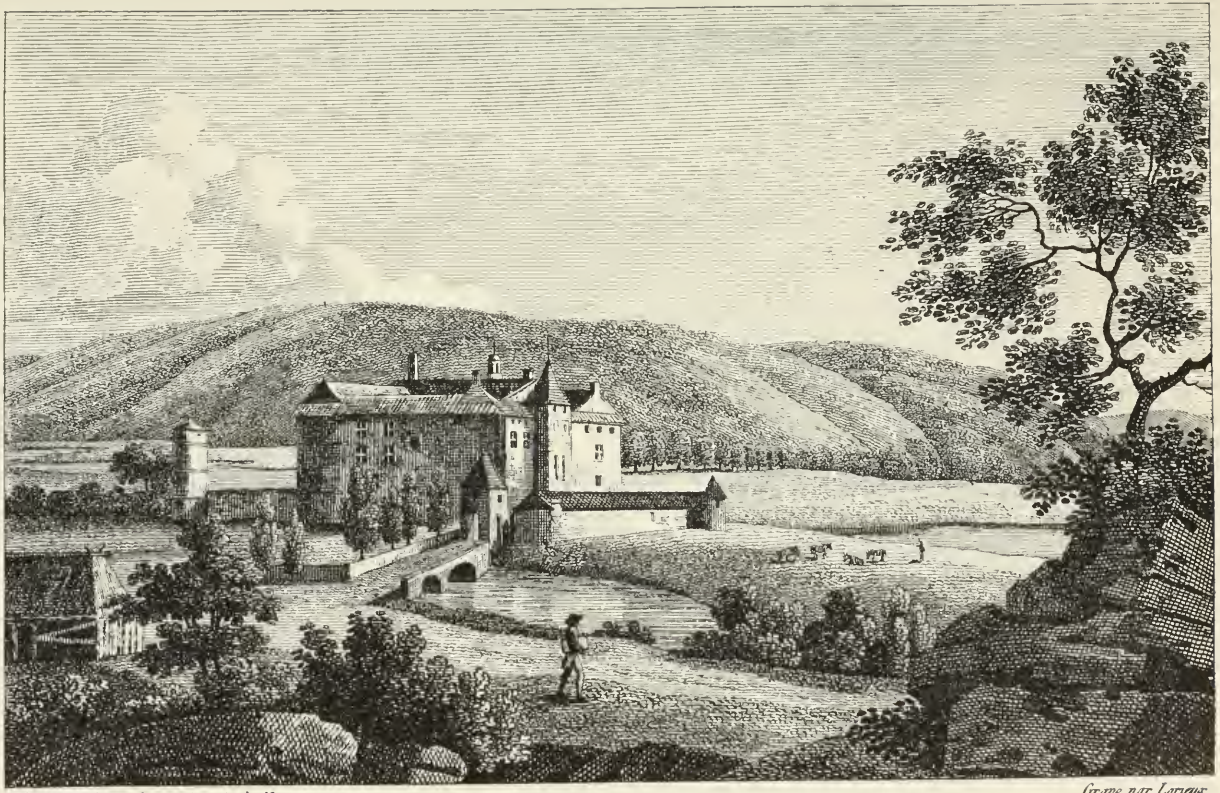
[2] There is further mention of this poet, who often exhibited more buffoonery than humour, and more ribaldry than wit, who was employed in the time of the Fronde to write what were called *Mazarinades.* From the Cardinal he passed to the great Condé, whom he followed even to the Spaniards. Blot, with whom he is generally associated, and who was attached to Gaston d'Orléans, had considerably more talent. The *Consecrated Bread,* of which Madame de Sévigné here speaks, is a burlesque poem on the churchwardens of Saint-Paul, who wanted to oblige him to surrender. Ménage says, it is his best composition.

LETTER 257

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Bourbilly, Monday, October 16, 1673.

At length, my dear child, I am arrived at the old Château of my forefathers. I have found my beautiful meadows, my little river, and the pretty mill, in the same places where I left them. These walls have afforded pleasure to better people than myself, and yet I am almost dead with grief, when I think of having left Grignan to come here: I could now weep heartily, if I were to give way to my sorrow; but I follow your advice, and endeavour to get the better of it. I have seen you here, my dear child, with Bussy, who used to amuse us so highly. Here it was that you called me *mother-in-law,* with such a pretty air. They have lopped the trees before the gate, which has made the walk up to the house very pleasant. We abound in corn here, but no money. It rains in torrents. I have been so little accustomed to these storms of late, that I am really angry at them. M. de Guitaud is at Epoisses: he is continually sending here, to know when I arrive, that he may come and fetch me. But that is not the way to do business. I shall pay him a visit, and you may judge that the conversation will turn upon you; I desire you will make yourself quite easy about what I shall say to him; I am not very imprudent; you shall hear from us both. I cannot dispense with seeing you; if you really love me, you will give me a proof of it this year. Adieu, my dear child, I am but this moment arrived, and am rather fatigued; when I am a little settled, I will write to you again.



Tiré du Cabinet de Mr C F A de Mussey *Gravé par Lorieux*

THE CHÂTEAU AT BOURBILLY, BURGUNDY.

LETTER 258

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Bourbilly, Saturday, October 21, 1673.

I arrived here Monday evening, as I immediately informed you. I found letters from Guitaud, which had been waiting for me some time. The next morning, at nine o'clock, he came here full gallop, wet as a drowned rat, for it rained incessantly. We had a great deal to say to each other: he talked much of you, and afterwards gave me an account of his own affairs, and of the reasons he had to be dissatisfied; he told me that the King has returned from Versailles, and many particulars respecting the war: he is of opinion, that it is M. de Grignan's interest to come to Court, and justify his conduct, as well as to take His Majesty's orders from his own mouth, relative to the operations of the war, in case it should be declared. All this he told me without any intention to flatter my wishes, or from any views of interest on his side; for he seems little disposed to return to Paris this winter.

After we had made a good dinner, considering where we were, a coach and six drove into the court-yard; Guitaud burst into a loud laugh; and whom should I see alight but the Comtesse de Fiesque and Madame de Guitaud, who ran and embraced me! I cannot express to you my astonishment at seeing them, nor the joy that Guitaud seemed to take in having thus agreeably surprised me. In short, the Comtesse is at Bourbilly, can you believe it? more beautiful, more healthy, more magnificent, and more lively, than you ever saw her. After mutual exclamations on both sides, which you will readily conceive, we sat round the fire, and talked of you; here again, you will easily guess the nature of the conversation, and the surprise of the Comtesse, when she found I had not brought you back with me. In short, they all expressed the warmest esteem

for you; and then we conversed on the news of the day.

Guitaud informed me, that MONSIEUR is resolved to make Mademoiselle de Grancey dressing-woman to MADAME, in the place of La Gourdon, who is to have a present of fifty thousand crowns; but this seems attended with a good deal of difficulty, for Maréchal de Grancey will not part with that sum, except as a marriage-portion to his daughter; and as he is apprehensive that he shall have a demand for the same sum when he comes to dispose of his daughter, he is resolved that MONSIEUR shall be at the whole expense. Madame de Monaco has the management of this affair: she is on good terms both with the Duc and Duchesse, and equally respected by them, only that it is a little disgusting now and then to see her bestow all those little caresses and speeches on the present MADAME, which she did on the last. I have heard of some other extraordinary things at Court, but they are not writeable. Madame de Marei [1] left Paris merely from prudential motives, when the collections and entertainments began, and retired into Burgundy; she was received at Dijon by a discharge of cannon. You may guess what a number of fine comments that circumstance gave rise to, and in what a light this journey appeared to the public; the truth is, she had a cause depending at Dijon, which she wanted to have decided; but, however, the *rencontre* was pleasant enough. The Comtesse is very diverting upon this subject: she has been about a fortnight at Epoisses; she came there from Guerchi. A certain little obscure fellow said one day, that the Abbé Têtu had soul enough for a large body: this diverted me extremely. At length, night surprised us in the midst of our chat, and after having admired all the curiosities of the place, they went away. They would fain have taken me with them, but I had too much business of importance to attend to. I shall not go to Epoisses till to-morrow, and shall return the next day. We shall

[1] The sister of Madame de Grancey. It appears that she was of the parties that frequented the Duc de Bourbon's, which made her suspected of coming to Dijon merely in quest of that Prince.

write to you all together; if you had come with me, you would have had the pleasure of meeting these good people, who would have kept you from being dull, I will answer for it.

As for the air here, there is no breathing in it without growing fat; it is moist and thick, and admirably calculated for restoring that humidity which the air of Provence had dried up. I shall finish all my business to-day: if you were in want of corn, I would offer you some of mine; I have above twenty thousand bushels to dispose of, and yet I cry famine in the midst of all this plenty. However, I have secured purchasers for as much as amounts to one hundred and forty thousand francs, and renewed my leases without any abatements. This is the whole of what I had to do, and I have had the honour of finding out expedients which escaped the Abbé with all his wisdom.

I am vexed beyond description at not being able to hear from you, and at not having it in my power to serve you: this situation is hardly bearable; I hope it will alter for the better. Bussy is still in Paris, gaining ground every day; he began with Madame de La Baume. Time, the impertinent meddler who changes everything, will perhaps improve his fortune. You will be glad to know that before he set out, he and his whole family equipped themselves in the newest style of fashion at Sémur: judge how well he will look. He is reconciled in this country with Jeannin, and the Abbé Fouquet [1].

I have just received a packet from Guitaud, with news which you shall have in your turn. He is to come to fetch me to-morrow or Monday. I embrace M. de Grignan, and assure him he would pity me, did he know what I suffer while absent from you. As for you, my dearest child, I embrace you with a tenderness that it is not given to every one to feel.

[1] These two personages played in the important parts in the book *Amours des Gaules*, the first, a ridiculous, and the second, a scandalous character: the Abbé was the brother of Nicolas Fouquet the Chief-Controller.

LETTER 259

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Epoisses, Wednesday, October 25, 1673.

I did not finish all my business at Bourbilly till Monday, when I came here, where I was expected with the greatest impatience. I found the master and mistress of the house as hospitable as ever, and the Comtesse [1], who dresses smartly, and enlivens all the country round her. I brought with me M. and Madame de Toulongeon, who are no strangers here; we were afterwards joined by Madame de Chatelus, and the Marquis de Bonneval, so that the party is complete. This is a large handsome house; M. de Guitaud takes great pleasure in making it as elegant as possible, and spares no expense for that purpose. He has nothing else to do with his money. I pity those who cannot do the same. My host and I have talked a great deal; I have the art of setting people a-going, and of attending to what they say. One might stay here a long time without being dull; you have been greatly praised among us. I do not think I should ever be for leaving it, if I could hear from you here; but the state of ignorance in which I am respecting you, almost distracts me. I puzzle my brains to think what you may have written to me; and what may have happened to you in three weeks; in short, I can have no rest for thinking of you. I shall certainly find five or six letters from you at Paris. I cannot conceive the reason why M. de Coulanges has not sent them to me here, as I desired him to do. However, I set out to-morrow on the road to Paris, where I shall not arrive till the eve of All-Saints. I am told that the roads already begin to be dangerous in this Province; I say nothing to you about the war, which some say is already declared, while others, who are of the ministerial party,

[1] De Fiesque.

will have it that every thing tends to peace; a little time will clear all up. M. d'Autun (Gabriel de Roquette) is in this country; I have not seen him, but he is very near us; and I have seen several who have been happy enough to have received his benediction. Adieu, my dear, my lovely child; I do not meet with a person who does not think you have reason to love me, from the great love which they see I bear you.

LETTER 260

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Auxerre, Friday, October 27, 1673.

I left Epoisses, and the company that I told you was there, yesterday. I was just nine days in Burgundy, and I may say that my presence and the Abbé's were very necessary at Bourbilly. I had a great deal of conversation with Guitaud, who amused me mightily by informing me of certain circumstances relating to his affairs, that I was before ignorant of; it is always good to hear both sides of a question: I was gratified, by having an opportunity of restoring him to my good opinion, which had been a little impaired by the stories I had heard concerning him, and which might have gone greater lengths, had I not been prepossessed in his favour by the openness of his countenance. I always thought him honest and sincere; and I find the only reason of his being dismissed from the Condé Mansion, was on account of his giving umbrage to some personages there, and that such a favourite as himself was by no means pleasing in so small a Court. There are some very extraordinary events in his romance; it seems as if it would end in a retreat to his Castle; I am not willing, however, to be too certain of this.

The Comtesse (de Fiesque) told me some admirable

things about the Grancey family[1]. There is something very curious in the plan of that house; but I beg that all jealousies keep silence in presence of the person[2] who is one of the actors in this comedy. He is the very quintessence of jealousy; he is jealousy itself; I wonder there was any left in the world, after the extravagant portion that fell to his lot. I should take great pleasure in talking over all these things with you; they are very amusing. Every one speaks of war; but d'Hacqueville says there have been some wagers laid that we shall have peace. God grant we may.

I wish much, my child, to know how you are; I fear you give way to your natural disposition, and absorb yourself in melancholy. Our good Abbé is very well, thank God; I am not a little proud of it; he salutes you affectionately; he wants much to hear something of you, and to know whether you remember the advice he used to give you, at the hazard of being hated for it, which, however, did not deter him. I embrace M. de Grignan; pray make my compliments to the Archbishop, if you are at Salon; and assure the Coadjutor, that in expectation of the time when, as he tells me, I am to love him so much, I love him a good deal.

LETTER 261

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Moret, Monday night, October 30, 1673.

I am now very near Paris, my child; but if it were not for the hope of finding letters there from you, my arrival would give me very little pleasure. I am continually thinking of what I have to do for you; of all I have to say to

[1] It was said that the Due was in love with the eldest daughter of Maréchal de Grancey, and Monsieur with the youngest. These ladies, from their great beauty, went by the name of *the angels*.

[2] Monsieur le Duc.

Brancas, La Garde, the Abbé de Grignan, d'Hacqueville, M. de Pomponne, and M. Le Camus; I foresee no pleasure to myself, but what I derive in some way or other from you. I really merit that my friends should beat me and drive me back again. Ah! would to heaven they would do so! Perhaps I may get the better of this humour, and my heart, which is at present such a slave to sorrow, may recover a little of its liberty; but it can never do otherwise than long passionately to see you: in the meantime, to talk of you shall be my only delight, the favourite employment of my time; but I will select my company and my subjects; I am sufficiently acquainted with life, to know, that what is pleasing to some people, is disagreeable to others. I have not quite forgotten the world; I know how tenderly and kindly it enters into the feeling of others, and I beg you therefore to trust to me, and fear nothing from the excess of my affection. If my foibles, and the unjust measures I have taken, have sometimes given offence to my love, I conjure you, my child, to excuse them in favour of their cause. I shall preserve this cause most religiously as long as I am in being, and I hope without doing it wrong to make myself less imperfect than I am: I endeavour daily to profit by my reflections, and if I could live as I have told you, two hundred years, I should be a wonderful personage at the end of that period.

If M. de Sens [1] had been in his diocese, I should have waited on him; I think I owe him that attention for his high opinion of you. I look at every place through which I passed fifteen months ago with such feelings of delight, and I reflect on the different feelings that I experience on seeing them again. What a strange thing is affection, such as mine for you!

I have heard from my son; his letters were written on the eve of an engagement; he seemed to think nothing of it; but was rather desirous of exercising his rapier by way of curiosity. I should have been dreadfully alarmed at this

[1] The Bishop of Sens.

letter, had I not been very well informed concerning the march of the Imperialists, and the great respect they have for your brother's regiment.

Good heavens! my dear child, how ill I use you! what nonsense I have written! Perhaps when I write you from Paris, I may send some trifle or other that may amuse you; the things, however, of most importance will come from Provence. But your health; ah! that afflicts me most. I fear you do not sleep well, and that you will be ill again; you tell me nothing about it, which only adds to my uneasiness.

LETTER 262

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Thursday, November 2, 1673.

At length, my dear child, I am arrived here in safety, after a journey of a month, which fatigued me less than the last night has done, though I had the best bed in the world. I never once closed my eyes; I counted every hour upon my watch, and the moment day broke, I got up: "for why remain in bed, if I cannot sleep [1]?" We entered Paris yesterday, which was All-Saints', the better day the better deed, and alighted at M. de Coulanges': I will not repeat to you all my folly and weakness on the occasion. I was not fit to be seen: however, I checked myself as much as possible, and said the wind had made my nose red. M. de Coulanges embraced me, then M. de Rarai, Madame de Coulanges, and Mademoiselle de Méri. In a moment after followed Madame de Sanzei, and Madame de Bagnols, and the Archbishop of Rheims, all full of love and admiration for the Coadjutor; then came Madame de La Fayette, M. de La Rochefoucauld, Madame Scarron, d'Hacqueville, La Garde, the Abbé de Grignan, and the Abbé Têtu. I am persuaded you hear and see all that

[1] An allusion to La Fontaine's Fable of *The Hare and Frogs.*

passed, even where you are, and the joy that was expressed on all sides, and "how is Madame de Grignan? and what journey have you had?" and a long train of et cæteras, without connection or end. At length supper was served, and the company having retired, I passed the night in the delightful manner I have described to you.

This morning at nine o'clock, La Garde, the Abbé de Grignan, Brancas, and d'Hacqueville, came into my room to have a little private chat; in the first place, I must tell you, that you cannot esteem Brancas, La Garde, and d'Hacqueville, too much; as for the Abbé de Grignan, that comes of course. I forgot to tell you, that the first thing I did last evening, was to read your four letters of the fifteenth, eighteenth, twenty-second and twenty-fifth of October. I felt all you so well express; but can I thank you sufficiently for your good and kind affection, and the care you take to inform me of your affairs? Ah! my dear child, it is but justice; for I have nothing at heart so much as your interest, whatever it may be: your letters are my life, waiting however for something better.

I am astonished that M. de Grignan's disorder has progressed in the way you tell me it has; in other words, he must be careful in Provence of every fold in his stocking: I wish he may do well, and that his fever may leave him, for the sword must be drawn. I hate the idea of this petty war.

I return to your three friends, whom you ought to love firmly, for they think of nothing but how they may serve you; they met with the right person in me for a conversation of this kind; accordingly we kept it up till noon. La Garde gives me strong assurances of M. de Pomponne's friendship; they are all very well satisfied with him. If you ask me what is the present subject of conversation at Paris, I shall tell you M. and Madame de Grignan, their affairs, their interests, their return, etc. In short, I have heard of nothing else hitherto; those who understand matters will tell you what they think of your return; I do not desire you to believe me; believe La Garde. We have been

considering for how many reasons you ought to come, in order to adjust matters, both with the head and the other principals, which your good friend [1] has used all his endeavours to confound; in short, he has knocked at every door, and artfully misrepresented things in his conversation, which is full of secret venom, concealed under the most insinuating address. I think it would be proper for you to declare openly your intentions of coming, and perhaps you may meet him here, for he talks of coming himself; and then M. de Pomponne and the rest of your friends will be ready to assist you, and set your affairs upon a proper and permanent footing; but while you are at such a distance, you will always escape their remembrance: besides, the person who speaks here, has always the advantage of him who says nothing. When you set out for Orange, I mean M. de Grignan, I think it would be advisable to inform M. de Louvois of the state of things by letter, that he may not be surprised.

I have just seen M. de Pomponne, M. de Bezons, Madame d'Uxelles, Madame de Villars, the Abbé de Pontcarré and Madame de Rarai, who all send you a thousand compliments and good wishes: in short, believe La Garde: this is all I have to say to you. It is the opinion here, that you should not send ambassadors, but that you and M. de Grignan should come in person. The war can make no difference. M. de Pomponne told d'Hacqueville, that affairs would not be so soon settled in Provence as some people might imagine, and that war often breaks out when there is the most talk of peace.

I must tell you a droll incident. The other day Madame de Ra****** and Madame de Bu****** had a high dispute about twelve pistoles; La Bu******, tired of the controversy, told her it was a trifle not worth disputing about, and so she would give it up. "Upon my word, Madame," says the other lady, "this is very generous of you, who have lovers to supply you with cash."—"As

[1] All this relates to a dispute which subsisted at that time between the Bishop of Marseilles and the Grignan family.

for that, Madame," replied La Bu******, "I am not obliged to explain myself to you; but I know this, that when I was first introduced to company, about ten years ago, you were obliged to pay money to yours[1]."

Despréaux went with Gourville to wait on the Prince, who was desirous that he should see his army. "Well," said he to the poet, "what do you think of my army?" "I think, Monseigneur," replied Despréaux, "it will be a very fine one when it comes of age." Now you must know, the oldest soldier amongst them is not above eighteen.

The Princesse de Modène[2] was just on my heels at Fontainebleau, she arrived this evening, she lodges at the Arsenal, the King is to pay her a visit to-morrow: she is to wait on the Queen at Versailles, and then adieu.

Friday evening, November 3.

M. de Pomponne has just paid me a kind visit. I expect to hear at what time to-morrow I may see him at his own house. He has not heard of a letter of suspension: in this country things are viewed in a different light from what they are in Provence; all the wise heads desire this suspension, lest you should be deceived, and in the prospect of a peace which they really wish: but they think you are in a place where you can see more clearly into the event of the Syndic; and they would not take any step that might displease you. The immense distance between us, prevents anything like just reasoning. Read all d'Hacqueville's letters with attention, for whatever he writes is of importance; indeed you cannot love him too well. Your brother is well; he is not certain yet where he will pass the winter. I am perfectly acquainted with all that relates to your interest, and I speak better upon the subject here than at Grignan.

[1] Almost without doubt these two were Madame de Rambures and Madame de Buzanval.

[2] Marie d'Este, Princesse de Modène, who was going to be espoused to the Duke of York, brother of Charles II., and after his death King of England, by the name of James II.

We could not help smiling at your care, in desiring me to send for La Garde and the Abbé de Grignan: alas! poor souls, they were already upon the watch, and thought of nothing but me.

I am wholly yours, my dear child, and am so well pleased with the time I dedicate to you, that I make everything give way to the least circumstance that relates to you. I heartily embrace our poor Comte: do you think I may continue to love him still? have you any objection to it?

LETTER 263

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, November 6, 1673.

I have had a charming conversation for more than two hours with M. de Pomponne; never had anyone a more favourable audience, or a more delightful reception. D'Hacqueville was present, who will tell you the same; we were both highly pleased with him. I do not know whether he thinks the present state of affairs likely to produce a peace; but he said the war should not prevent him from asking leave for M. de Grignan to come to Paris after the Assembly, and that he thought your best way would be to take your own time for this journey. You are right in saying, that honours will not change my feelings with respect to you: alas! my poor love, you are everything to me, and everything revolves round you without approaching you, or diverging from me. How good it was of you to write to my friend Corbinelli, and to Madame de La Fayette! The latter is charmed with you, and loves you better than ever she did: she longs earnestly to see you here: you know her, and may depend upon her sincerity. M. de La Rochefoucauld is as amiable and worthy as ever; he has not stirred out of my room these two days. You may depend upon his friendship, and on

that of many others whom I will not name; for it would be an endless catalogue. I have had several visits from personages of fashion, and my cousins de Bussy among the rest, very smartly dressed in the beautiful silks they bought at Sémur. The Duchess of York is at the Arsenal; all the town flocks thither; the King has been to see her, and she has been to Versailles to visit the Queen, who ordered her a *fauteuil*[1]. The Queen is to return her visit to-morrow, and on Thursday she is to decamp.

I dined to-day at Madame de La Fayette's, for the first time of my going out, for I have hitherto played the person of importance in my own apartment. Do you not purpose going to Salon[2], when Monsieur de Grignan is at Orange? I have received answers from all your gentlemen; pray remember me to them sometimes, and to your ladies too, whom I greatly honour and esteem. Does Madame de Beaumont still keep up her characteristic of forgetfulness? You may say as you please, my dear child, but I am very uneasy about your health; you sleep ill I am persuaded, and you harbour a train of destructive thoughts. Return, after an absence of three years, and breathe again your native air. If your family have any regard for your health, they ought to consult what may tend to its preservation. I say nothing to M. de Grignan; he can hardly suspect me of not thinking of him.

LETTER 264

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, November 10, 1673.

I love you too well, my dear child, to be happy here without you. Alas! I have brought Provence and all

[1] A ceremonial chair of State.

[2] A small town in the diocese of Arles, at about five leagues from Aix; and where the Archbishop of Arles, who in these letters is always styled the Coadjutor, resided at that time.

your affairs along with me; *In van si fugge, quel che nel cor si porta*[1]. I am a proof of this, for I do nothing but languish after you perpetually. I cannot bring myself to a proper resignation to the will of Providence, in the disposition he has made with respect to us; never surely did any one stand so much in need of the aid of religion as I do; but, my child, let us talk about our affairs. I had written to M. de Pomponne as you desired me; and as I had not sent my letter, and thought it a pretty good one, I showed it to Mademoiselle de Méri to gratify my vanity. I have dined with the Abbé de Grignan and La Garde; after dinner, we went to d'Hacqueville's; we talked a great deal, and as they have the best judgment in the world, and as I never do anything without them, I am never deficient. They think there never was a journey more necessary than M. de Grignan's. You will say, but how is leave of absence to be obtained, now war is declared? I shall answer, that it is more declared in the *Gazettes* than here: in this country everything is suspended. We expect something, but we know not what: the Assembly of Cologne however is not yet broken up, and M. de Chaulnes, by what I hear to-day, will not hold our States, but M. de Lavardin, who arrived yesterday, and sets out on Monday with M. de Boucherat: this gives reason to hope that some negotiation is going forward. Not a word is said here of war; we shall however soon see: you must always hold yourself in readiness: do nothing which may break the neck of your journey, and confide in your friends, who would not wish you to ask leave of absence unseasonably; they do not approve of your sending an ambassador; yourself, or nobody. When you are here, things will wear a different aspect from what they do in Provence. Good heavens, my dear child, if there were only this reason, come for your health's sake, come that you may not be destroyed, come and *cook* other thoughts, come and resume your consequence, and put a stop to the injustice that has been done you. If it were I alone who spoke these

[1] In vain we fly from what we bear in our heart. [Translation.]

words, I should advise you not to attend to it; but the persons who give you this counsel are not easily corrupted, and are not accustomed to flatter me.

The Abbé de Grignan, La Garde, and I, have been to pay a visit to your first President [1]; he is returned from Orléans. He kissed the King's hand the day before yesterday; when His Majesty told him, that he would have strange turbulent spirits to deal with in Provence. He is a man that will restore a good understanding on all sides; he is a man, in short, that——. I am vexed to think that you have yet received none of my letters but those which I wrote upon the road. Heavens, shall I never hear your voice again? Alas! my dear child, what a distance is there between my fireside and yours! How happy was I when with you! I felt my joy in its full extent, and have nothing to upbraid myself with; I made the most of my time, and kept my pleasure till the last moment.

The Queen has desired *Quantova* [2] to let her have one of her Spanish women to attend her who was not yet gone: this she readily granted; and it has so delighted the Queen that she declares she shall never forget the obligation. I am surprised that Madame de Monaco has not yet sent me any compliments on your account. I have received a great many visits and civilities from Versailles. My son is in excellent health. M. de Turenne is still in my son's army. They are at Philisbourg, the Imperialists are very strong; you know, I suppose, that they have thrown a bridge across the Maine; I found poor Guitaud agitated to death at this intelligence: I told him that nothing would have prevailed on me to have quitted Provence, but the dislike I had to hearing second-hand news, and not being able to see things with my own eyes. The Abbé Têtu is very fond of Madame de Coulanges, but only till you return, he says; I sup almost every night with her. M. de Coulanges' cabinet is more beautiful than it ever was;

[1] M. Marin, then just nominated to the chair in the Parliament of Aix.

[2] Madame de Montespan.

your little portraits are in their full lustre, and very properly disposed. Everyone here entertains the most respectful and friendly, I had almost said tender, remembrance of you; but this latter sentiment ought not to be so general. I embrace M. de Grignan, and wish him all possible happiness. Brancas and M. de Caumartin are here; the former embraces you: the latter does not embrace you; but he has just had an admirable conversation with the worthy M. Marin [1], to give his son instructions with regard to the behaviour he is to observe towards M. de Grignan.

LETTER 265

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, November 13, 1673.

I received my dear child's long, good, and delightful letter of the fifth instant, by the Chevalier de Chaumont. I know the nature of this kind of dispatches; they relieve the heart; and are written with an impetuosity, that gives pleasure to the writer. Of all those to whom you write such packets, I certainly give them the best reception, and am the most interested in their contents. I enter into all your sentiments. I seem to see, to hear, and to be with you. I read your letter with our dear d'Hacqueville, whom you cannot love too well; he is very angry that you should suffer yourself to be so far carried away by resentment; he would have you speak smoothly and stab home, as your adversaries do; or if that appears a conduct too treacherous for you to adopt, he would have you curb your words and your resentment; would have you go on as usual, with-

[1] M. Marin was lively and witty. He was once in the library of a man well known to be of Jewish extraction. He noticed on the back of his books, Coats of Arms, to which, like many others who bear them, he was not entitled. "What do I see there?" said he. "My Arms," replied the other. "I thought," resumed the President, "they were Hebrew characters."

out fretting and making yourself ill: he wishes you not to make open war, and, above all, never to bring forward M. de Pomponne in things that are written to you privately, and of which the source might be easily traced. This would be to draw upon ourselves the hatred of those who confide in us, and prevent them from giving us information in future: I entreat you to be very cautious in this respect. If you imagine yourself to be otherwise than on a good footing in this part of the world, you are mistaken; we consider it, however, absolutely necessary that you should accompany M. de Grignan. As to the Coadjutor's journey, we think it may serve to amuse him agreeably enough, but that it is not at all necessary to your affairs, and would therefore be ridiculous if undertaken on that account. If you cannot get leave, it would be better not to let any of the family appear, but suffer everything to remain quiet till your return. You must depend upon d'Hacqueville and La Garde, supported by M. de Pomponne, to know when it will be proper to ask leave. The first President of Provence does not pass here for a nephew of M. Colbert's. I cannot think where you picked up the relationship; he is the son of M. Marin, who bears the title of Châtaigneraie, and was Controller at Orléans; this is all I know of him. I wrote you word that we had paid him a visit; he is the person with whom you must regulate your pretensions. Be assured, my dear child, that M. de Grignan will be able to stand his ground firmly, unless by some fault of his own.

You estimate at a higher value than we do, Madame de Montespan's present to Madame de La Fayette. It is a little writing-desk of St. Lucca wood, very prettily ornamented indeed, and a plain crucifix. As the fair lady is fond of being thought generous, she amuses herself in making these kinds of presents to the ladies of her acquaintance; but I cannot see that it is of any great value or consequence to our friend. I have just learned that your first President is in no way related to M. Colbert, except that his sister, who is to marry the Marquis d'Oppéde, is

the daughter of his father's third wife, who was sister to M. Colbert of Teron; this is their pedigree.

But, my dear child, when I reflect that I am two hundred leagues from the field of battle; when I wake in the middle of the night unable to close my eyes afterwards, I think of you, that having no amusement, and hearing of nothing else, you have no rest, like me, and will certainly be ill. Would to heaven you were here with me! It would be of more service to you than being at Lambesc. M. de Chaulnes is returned, but is to go again after the States; the others remain at Cologne [1]. M. de Lavardin called to see me during the short stay he made here; that is another friend whom I shall bring into play on his return. I neglect nothing with Madame de Coulanges, and the Abbé Têtu; that channel is already taken care of, and in our own hands; but it will be long before we shall be able to undertake any thing decisive.

M. Chapelain is dying; he has had a sort of apoplexy, which has taken away his speech; he confessed, by squeezing his confessor's hand in answer to the questions he put to him; he sits upright in his chair like a statue. Thus doth God humble the pride of the philosopher [2].

[1] France had at that time plenipotentiaries at Cologne, to assist at the negotiation for peace.

[2] The extent of his acquaintance with the sciences, which were at that time little known, justly obtained him this name. He had besides refused the situation of tutor to the Dauphin. But though he disdained honours, he loved money. This philosopher died worth twenty thousand crowns. Anecdotes of his avarice are recorded which would shine in comedy. He died the victim of his vice. Going to the Academy in the midst of winter, he preferred walking through the water, to paying a trifling sum to pass over by means of a plank that had been placed across a stream; and when arrived at the Academy he avoided the fire, and sat at the board, to hide his wet and dirty shoes. He thus caught a violent cold, which occasioned his death, and gave rise to the expression, "Never poor poet died so rich."

LETTER 266

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, November 17, 1673.

We make the most here of the Castle of Orange. M. de Gordes, who knows it, is apprehensive that it will hold out longer than people imagine, so that if M. de Grignan is fortunate enough to finish the siege in a short time, it will turn out greatly to his credit; and if the troops he has with him, should not prove sufficient, no one will be surprised at the delay, nor throw any blame upon him. The expense is also talked of, which will by no means be trifling; and, in short, all your friends, and they are not a few, do their utmost without being at the cost of anything but to speak the truth. The first President of the Court of Aids was by my fireside when the Abbé de Grignan came in from Versailles; I wish you could have seen how heartily he entered into our interests: I am certain he will not easily be the dupe of the *hail*[1].

I supped with Dangeau at Madame de Coulanges', where we had a great deal of conversation about you; he swears if he had not met you at Aix, he would have taken the Princesse, his ward[2], to Grignan; he had been mentioning you to her all the way from Modène; the poor Princesse is dreadfully afflicted with a dysentery. Affairs in England do not go on as could be wished; the Parliament is not fond of this alliance, and wishes for a rupture between England and France[3]. There is much talk of a cessation of arms; if that should take place, you must not hesitate an instant about coming. Your first Presi-

[1] A feigned name intended for the Bishop of Marseilles.

[2] M. Dangeau having concluded the marriage of the Princesse of Modène with the Duke of York, had the charge of conducting her to England.

[3] Charles II. made peace with Holland, the 19th February, 1674, but refused to comply with his Parliament in declaring war against France.

dent will set out about Lent. The Prince and the Duc are returned, and Gourville also. A thousand compliments await you from Madame de La Fayette's, and the good folks there, by whom you are much beloved and esteemed.

LETTER 267

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, November 20, 1673.

I am just returned, my dear, from Versailles, where I have been, as it were, in a veil. I have seen nobody but M. de Pomponne, we dined alone with him; his wife and sister-in-law were at Pomponne. After dinner, we talked together a full hour, considering and reasoning upon what was to be done, in order to leave the Assembly at liberty to deliberate in spite of opposition. You would have been charmed with M. de Pomponne, if you had seen how he entered into all this reasoning, and into the best plans for your advantage. I never saw so excellent a friend; for such he truly appeared to-day. After having placed this affair in a thousand different points of view, d'Hacqueville and he were of opinion, that we ought to wait till the siege of Orange was ended, in order to make that a favourable occasion of rendering this opposition odious; and to stay till the opposition was begun, because it would be time enough then for His Majesty to order it to be deliberated upon. The Assembly is not yet over, and that is sufficient. They thought, that to speak of it at present, would be to advance a thing which has not yet taken place, and which perhaps never will take place. And as the affair of Orange is not yet ended, so its expenses will not appear to have so much weight, till its success is known; and there might be reason to fear an unfavourable, or at least an indecisive, answer: whereas there may be so dexterous a turn given to the affair in a few days, that

you may have reason to expect a satisfactory termination. M. de Pomponne is very much concerned at the excess your divisions are carried to; he is persuaded that the Controller will hinder the opposition; and that the Assembly will have freedom of deliberation. It is impossible to write in stronger terms than he has written on this subject, even to the Bishop of Marseilles himself. He resolves to bring you all together after the Assembly is over, and to effect a perfect reconciliation between you. Leave it to him when it is proper to demand your congé. He thinks M. de Grignan is long in setting out for Orange; it is the general subject of conversation here; and you are obliged to M. de Vivonne, and to M. de Gordes, for not treating it as a trifle; and for saying, that if you should not succeed with your pitiful regiment of Galerians, and your embroidered gentry, who serve only for the decoration of the siege, it would not be at all surprising; that you will perhaps want additional troops; that the example of Trèves shows plainly that one may be a long time besieging a paltry little town; that the Governor of Orange is an adventurer who is not afraid of being hanged, who has two hundred men, with twenty pieces of cannon, very little ground to defend, only one place of entry, and a great provision of powder and corn. This is what these gentlemen say, and what many echoes answer; so that M. de Grignan cannot be blamed, and may, perhaps, perform a very pretty action.

All my friends tell me continually that I am handsome; they perfectly tease me: I believe they are at a loss for conversation. Alas! my poor little eyes are quite sunk into my head; I have the vexation not to be able to sleep till five in the morning; and after all this they pretend to admire me. Our friend d'Hacqueville does not write to you this evening; but I send you the news he had written for you in the morning. He is pleased with our little journey, though we have done nothing. It is no easy matter to be determined, and to know what we have to do.

I told you that the Prince, and the Duc his son, were

returned, very well pleased that your imagination is no longer obliged to travel over Flanders in search of them. Had they not already made an ample provision of laurels, those they have gathered this year would not be sufficient to defend or to adorn them. Bonn is taken: so far so good. M. de Turenne is desirous to return home, and to put *my son's army* into winter quarters. All the officers say, Amen.

M. de La Rochefoucauld does not stir from Versailles; the King sends for him, and makes him sit by Madame de Montespan to hear the rehearsal of an opera, which will surpass all that we have yet heard; you must come and see it. We make no doubt of your obtaining leave, nor of the necessity of your coming hither. Do not neglect to consult the Coadjutor upon every occasion, he is the source of good sense and wise expedients; and if he were not in the house with you, you ought to go in quest of him, to the farthest part of Provence. There are occasions when his presence would perhaps have great effect. I am persuaded that he would spare neither his abilities nor his health to be serviceable to you. When I consider how the Bishop spends his money, I cannot comprehend that he has any thoughts of yielding. As for an agreement between you, I wish it, and shall always wish it, if it were only on account of the mischief this quarrel does to your person and your temper. I am not the only person who thinks thus. The Archbishop of Rheims is a great acquisition to you; so many others send their compliments and good wishes to you, that I should never have done if I were to enumerate them. I beg you to remember me to the great and divine Roquesante: tell him he has promised not to forget me. M. de Grignan and M. le Coadjutor, you do well to love me; but I defy you both to love Madame de Grignan better than I do.

LETTER 268

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, November 24, 1673.

I assure you, my dear, that I am very uneasy respecting your siege of Orange: I can have no peace till M. de Grignan has extricated himself from that ridiculous affair. It was thought here at first, that no other ammunition besides roasted apples would be wanting to carry on the siege. Guilleragues [1] said it was only a duel, a single combat between M. de Grignan and the Governor of Orange, and that M. de Grignan ought to be proceeded against as a duellist, and to lose his head. We have made the truth appear in opposition to these ridiculous witticisms: and Madame de Richelieu, with her usual goodness, told the King at dinner, how the case stands. Several persons are rightly informed of it at present; and people begin now to go from one extreme to another, and to say, that M. de Grignan will not succeed in it; and that he ought not to undertake to force two hundred men, well furnished with cannon, since he has no other troops than those pitiful galley-slaves, who are not much esteemed for a siege. The Duc and M. de La Rochefoucauld are persuaded he will not succeed. You know the world is always in extremes. The event will determine everything: I wish it may prove successful. I can have no joy or tranquillity, till I know the end of it.

I have made your compliments to Brancas; he is persuaded, you would not at present be proof against anyone, who could offer you the suffrages of two Consuls.

[1] Guilleragues was Secretary to the Cabinet Council, and was afterwards Ambassador at Constantinople. Boileau addressed his fifth epistle to him, beginning with this line:

Esprit né pour la cour, et maître en l'art de plaire.

Born for the Court, and master of the art of pleasing.
[Translation.]

Madame Colonne[1] was found upon the Rhine in a boat among some peasants; she was going I know not whither, into some remote part of Germany. Mademoiselle de Méri informs me, she has the headache so violently that she cannot write to you: she therefore begs me to make her remembrances to you. Those you send me in your letters are so extremely natural, that scarcely anything else is talked of, but the excess of our affection. I have in my pocket, letters of M. de Coulanges, and of M. d'Hacqueville, which speak of nothing but me. It is true, I have enjoyed more of your friendship and affection in my journey, than I should have done in my whole life. I felt it plainly, and the time was very pleasant to me; you cannot comprehend the uneasiness I suffered in seeing it pass so swiftly away. You are too grateful, my dear, for such slender obligations. When I consider that all my good will to you produces nothing substantial, I am ashamed of what you say in return: it is true, my intention is good, and this gives me sometimes such happy turns of expression, when I am speaking of your interests, that if I had power or influence equal to my fluency of speech, they would have some effect.

We were stopped short the other day by M. de Pomponne, who assured us that he had written to the Controller, to desire that if he could not prevent the opposition, he would at least leave to the Assembly the liberty of giving their opinions: we did not then dare to let him understand that we desired something more. But as I am continually thinking on your affairs, I told M. d'Hacqueville, that I desired once for all to be able to form an opinion of the difficulty there would be of speaking to the King of this affair, in order to know what might be depended on, and to endeavour to get free from that servitude, which the Bishop of Marseilles knows how to make use of in so generous a manner. Madame de La Fayette encouraged us in this design; and to-morrow we are to set

[1] Niece of Cardinal Mazarin, and wife of the High Constable Colonne.

out, he and I alone, without any further intention than to dine with M. de Pomponne, and consider what turn it will be proper to give to this business. We intend to go purely with this single view, without admitting a thought of anything besides; we shall see neither King nor Queen; I shall be in a plain dress, and we shall visit no one but M. de Pomponne. When we study to pay our court well, we seldom succeed: I will return a few days after to pay my devoirs. To-morrow the great d'Hacqueville and I are to have only you in our thoughts; I shall return in the evening, and write to you.

I saw Madame de *Souliers*[1] yesterday, with whom I had a great deal of conversation; she told me Bodinar was entirely in the interest of the Bishop of Marseilles; I replied I did not believe it; she assured me that she knew it to be a fact; I said we should see. She told me a hundred little things, which irritated me exceedingly; but as you have no need of being provoked more than you have already been, I shall not acquaint you with them.

I have never suffered more uneasiness than I now do, as well on account of the siege of Orange, as your affairs at the Assembly; I am more taken up with them than if I were with you.

The Marquis de *Souliers* came to-day to see me, with little La Garde, who is in my opinion very agreeable; you may tell Madame la Presidente what I say of him; they will all set out in a few days. I think M. de Souliers is going to enlist under the banner of St.-Ursula, and he will probably increase the number of your enemies. Farewell, my dear, till to-morrow evening, on my return from Versailles.

[1] Written thus somewhat disguises the real name of *Soliers*.

LETTER 268[A]

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, November 27, 1673.

Your letter, my dear, appears to be written in the style of a conqueror; you had balanced your account when you wrote, you had gained all your causes. Your enemies seemed confounded; you saw your husband go forth at the head of the *drapello elletto* [1], and you breathed nothing but success from the Orange expedition. The sun of Provence dissipates, at least in its meridian, the most gloomy vapours; in short, your disposition shone forth in every line of your letter. May heaven preserve you long in this happy state of mind! You are not to be blamed for seeing things in this light where you are; nor are we for viewing them here in a different one. You think the advantage is on your side; we wish it as ardently as you can do, and in that case are equally against any compromising; but supposing money, which is the ruling god in all these things, should deceive you in your reckoning, you will then, I fancy, agree with us in owning that we should embrace any expedient. You see we do not always think alike, on account of the distance which separates us; distance indeed! this it is too that prevents us from hearing what is said upon the subject. We must however believe, that each party speaks as he thinks: if you were here, you would say as we do; and if we were there, we should think as you do.

Many people are curious to know how you will get out of the affair of the Syndicship. Believe me, the loss of that little battle will have a different effect here from what it will in Provence. We let slip no opportunity of saying all that should be said relative to M. de Grignan's

[1] The sacred banner; alluding to an expression in Tasso's *Jerusalem.*

expenses, the great zeal he shows for His Majesty's service, and how much he is beloved in his Province: we forget nothing: and for natural tones, choice and flow of words, I may say without vanity, that we will not yield to those who pay visits in the morning by torch-light. But as a truce is talked of, and as M. de La Garde thinks your presence necessary, be perfectly easy respecting the conduct of those who know how and when to ask leave of absence for you. I can easily comprehend the expenses of this siege: I admire the inventions of the demon to make you throw away money: I am more vexed than any other person; for besides the reasons that render your presence necessary, I have one in particular that makes me impatient for you to come this year. The Abbé is desirous of settling accounts with me, relating to my guardianship; now this can be done only in the presence of all the parties. My son will be here, if you will come: judge then of the pleasure you will give me in doing it. Besides, it would be imprudent to delay an affair of such importance. The Abbé is old and infirm, and may die suddenly, in which case I shall not know how to turn myself, and shall be exposed to all the chicanery of the Bretons. I shall say no more: judge of my interest, and of the great desire I have to be quit of so important a charge. You will have time enough to conclude your Assembly; after which I must entreat this mark of your esteem, that I may die in peace. I leave your own kind heart to meditate on this.

The Queen dismissed all her women yesterday: no one knows why. It is imagined she wanted to get rid of one in particular, and that, to make no distinction, she parted with all. Mademoiselle de Coëtlogon [1] is with Madame de Richelieu; La Mothe [2], with the Maréchale; La Marck [3], with Madame de Crussol; Ludres and Dampierre [4] return to MADAME; du Rouvroi is with her mother,

[1] Afterwards the Marquise de Cavoie.
[2] Afterwards Duchesse de La Ferté.
[3] Afterwards Comtesse de Lannion.
[4] Afterwards Comtesse de Morcuil.

who has taken her home with her; Lannoi [1] is going to be married, and seems quite happy; and as for Théobon [2], I fancy she will not remain on hand. This is all I know of the affair at present.

The Abbé Têtu is very well pleased with what you say to him through me: we often sup together. You stand exceedingly well with the Archbishop of Rheims: Madame de Coulanges is not quite on such a good footing with the brother [3] of that prelate, so you may look upon that channel as stopped up. Brancas is quite in your interest; and you are beloved by Madame de Villars. La Garde and I have at length seen your first President; he is a very well-made man, and of a pleasing countenance. Besons says, he would make an excellent bull-dog if he wished to bite. He received us with great civility; we presented your and M. de Grignan's compliments to him. Some people say he will be a turn-coat, and love you better than the Bishop. *Le flux les amena, le reflux les emmène* [4]. Did I inform you that the Chevalier de Buous [5] was here? he is just come from Brest, and on his way passed through Vitré, where he had an admirable conversation with Rahuel; he asked who M. de Grignan was, and who I was. Rahuel made answer, that M. de Grignan was a man of distinction, and the principal person in Provence, but that it was at an immense distance; and that Madame (meaning me) would have done much better to have married her daughter a little nearer to Rennes. The Chevalier was highly diverted with this account of the family. Adieu, my dearest child; I am wholly yours. This is a truth nearly akin to that of two and two make four.

[1] Afterwards Marquise de Montrevel.

[2] Afterwards Comtesse de Beuvron.

[3] M. de Louvois, Minister for War Affairs.

[4] The tide of fortune brought them in, the ebb will carry them back. [Translation.]

[5] Captain of a man-of-war, and first cousin of M. de Grignan.

LETTER 269

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, December 1, 1673.

This siege of Orange is as unpleasant to me as it can be to you; what a ridiculous and expensive undertaking! The only good that I see in it, is the proof it has given of the love and attachment the people of Provence bear M. de Grignan, by the number and rank of those that attend him on this expedition. This will cut his enemies to the soul; but still, let him do what he will, the affair will bring him neither profit nor fame. I heartily wish it was once well over.

I supped with *Quanto's* fair friend [1]; you may depend upon it you will be well defended, if you are attacked in that quarter. She spoke of you in terms of the greatest regard and affection. She declared she had never met with any one who so completely suited her taste as yourself, and that no one could exceed you in amiableness of mind and beauty of person. She expressed great regret at your absence, and in a way not to be suspected. Her brother is not at all in Madame de Coulanges' good graces. Volonne has purchased Purnon's place of *maître-d'hôtel* to MADAME: this is a very pretty establishment; and thus has Providence seen fit to settle Madame de Volonne. It is certain that *Quanto* (Madame de Montespan), finding the Queen's bed-chamber a den of hydras, thought it the surest way to cut them off at once. What does not happen to-day, may perhaps happen to-morrow.

It is affirmed, that M. de Vivonne has the post of Colonel-General of the Swiss guards [2]; and M. de Monaco is named to succeed him as General of the galleys. I did

[1] Madame Scarron.

[2] This post, which was vacant by the death of the Comte de Soissons, was a short time afterwards given to the Duc du Maine, from whom it descended to the Prince de Dombes, his son.

not tell you how well I was received by the wife of the latter upon your account. The new opera is in the highest vogue; every creature you meet is singing part of it. The King declared the other day, that if he were at Paris, he would not miss a night: a declaration which will be worth a hundred thousand francs to Baptiste [1].

M. de Turenne has obtained leave of absence, and his army is going into winter quarters. I shall expect your brother now every day, and your ladyship a short time afterwards, if you have ever so little value for me. The Abbé Têtu lets slip no opportunity of rendering you service. He is another of those I have undeceived. My sweet child, be careful of your health; above all things endeavour to sleep, by banishing at night every thought that may tend to keep you awake.

LETTER 269A

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, December 4, 1673.

I am at length relieved by having the siege of Orange taken off my mind; it was an additional load to the burden that oppresses me. Nothing now remains but the Syndical war; I wish it was over. I suppose you will not delay entering upon it, now the little battle of Orange is gained. You cannot think what eagerness there was to be informed of the success of this curious siege. It was talked of in the first rank of news. I embrace the conqueror of Orange, but shall make him no other compliment than that of assuring him that it is with real joy I find this little adventure has taken so happy a turn: I heartily wish he may meet with the same success in all he undertakes, and embrace him with my whole heart. The attachment of the nobility to him is truly delightful: few persons could boast

[1] Lully.

so numerous a train at so short a warning. M. de La Garde is just set out to know what is said of the conquest of Orange: he is loaded with our instructions, and with good sense and affection for us. D'Hacqueville sends me word, that he would advise M. de Grignan to write to the King; I wish this letter was, by virtue of magic, already in the hands of M. de Pomponne, or M. de La Garde, for I am afraid lest it should not come at a favourable time. The business of the Syndicship has taken possession of my brain, since the siege of Orange has left it.

We supped again yesterday with Madame Scarron and the Abbé Têtu, at Madame de Coulanges'. We had a great deal of chat, in which you had your share. We took it into our heads to conduct Madame Scarron home, at midnight, to the very farthest end of the Faubourg St.-Germain, a great way beyond Madame de La Fayette's, almost as far as Vaugirard, and quite in the country, where she lives, in a large handsome house [1], the entrance of which is forbidden to every one, with a large garden, and beautiful and spacious apartments: she has an equipage, servants, and a genteel table; dresses neatly but elegantly in the style of a woman who associates with people of rank: she is amiable, handsome, good, free from affectation, and, in a word, an excellent companion. We returned very merrily, in the midst of a number of flambeaux, and in full security from thieves.

Madame d'Heudicourt [2] is gone to pay her court. It is a long time since she was seen in this part of the world. Everyone thinks, that if she were not with child she would soon resume her former familiarities; and it is therefore imagined that Madame Scarron has no longer so great a resentment against her as formerly. Her return however was brought about by other people, and is merely tolerated. The little d'Heudicourt [3] is as handsome as an

[1] The house where the King's children by Madame de Montespan were brought up, under the care of Madame Scarron, their governess.

[2] Bonne de Pons, Marquise d'Heudicourt.

[3] Afterwards the Marquise de Montgon.

angel; she has been of her own head at Court for this week past, and always keeps close to the King; this little creature enlivens everyone by her presence: she is the prettiest piece of coquetry that ever was seen—she is but five years old, yet she knows as much of the Court as those who have been there all their lives.

Some one told the Dauphin the other day, that there was a man in Paris, who had lately exhibited an extraordinary piece of workmanship, which was a little cart drawn by fleas: the Dauphin, turning to the Prince de Conti, said, "Who do you think, cousin, made the harness?" —"Oh," replied the Prince, "some spider of the neighbourhood." Was not this good? The Queen's maids still continue dispersed; it is said they intend to make ladies of the palace, of the bed-chamber, and of the table, serve instead of maids of honour. The whole, however, will be reduced to four of the palace, which will be the Princesse d'Harcourt, Madame de Soubise, Madame de Bouillon, and Madame de Rochefort; but nothing is certain yet. Adieu, my dear child. I would have confessed yesterday, but a very able and good man refused me absolution, on account of my enmity to the Bishop: if your confessors do not treat you in the same way, they are ignorant people, and know nothing of their duty.

Madame de Coulanges embraces you. She wished to write to you to-day; she continues to render you all the service in her power, and suffers no opportunity to pass unimproved. She is heartily rejoiced at the taking of Orange. She goes now and then to Court, but never without saying something handsome of you.

LETTER 270

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, December 8, 1673.

I must begin, my dear child, by telling you of the death of the Comte de Guiche: this is the chief subject of conversation at present. The poor youth died of sickness and fatigue in M. de Turenne's army; the news came on Tuesday morning. Father Bourdaloue went to acquaint the Maréchal de Gramont with it; who feared it the moment he saw him, knowing the declining state of his son. He made every one go out of his chamber, which was a little apartment near the Convent of the Capuchins, and as soon as he found himself alone with Bourdaloue, he threw himself upon his neck, saying, that he guessed but too well what he had to tell him; that it was his death-stroke, and that he received it as such from the hand of God; that he lost the true, the only object of his tenderness and natural affection; that he had never experienced any real joy, or violent grief, but through his son, who was not a common character. He threw himself on a bed, unable to support his grief, but without weeping, for this is a situation that denies the relief of tears. Bourdaloue wept, but had not yet spoken a word. At last he began to comfort him with religious discourse, in which he employed his well known zeal and eloquence. They were six hours together; after which Bourdaloue, to induce him to make a complete sacrifice, led him to the church of these good Capuchins, where vigils were said for his son. He entered the church fainting and trembling, supported more by the crowd that pressed round him on every side, than by his feet; his face was so much disfigured with grief, that he could scarcely be known. The Duc saw him in this lamentable condition, and related it to us at Madame de La Fayette's, with tears. The poor Maréchal returned

at last to his little apartment, where he remains like a man under sentence of death. The King has written to him. No one is admitted to see him. Madame de Monaco [1] is inconsolable, and refuses to see company. Madame de Louvigny [2] is likewise incapable of receiving comfort; but it is only because she is not at all grieved. Do not you wonder at her good fortune? She is in a moment become Duchesse de Gramont. The Chancellor's lady [3] is transported with joy: the Comtesse de Guiche [4] behaves admirably well; she weeps when they tell her all the kind things her husband said, and the excuses he made to her when he was dying. "He was a very amiable man," she says, "I should have loved him passionately, if he had loved me in the slightest degree; I suffered his contempt with grief, and his death affects me with pity; I always hoped he would change his sentiments with regard to me." This is certainly true; there is not the least fiction in it. Madame de Verneuil [5] feels real concern on this occasion. I believe it will be sufficient, if you only desire me to make your compliments to her; so you need only write to the Comtesse de Guiche, to Madame de Monaco, and Madame de Louvigny. The good d'Hacqueville has been desired to go to Frazé, thirty leagues from hence, to tell the news to Madame de Gramont, and to carry her a letter written by the poor youth a little before he died. He made a full confession of the faults of his past life, asked pardon publicly, and sent to tell Vardes a great many things which may benefit him. In a word, he ended the comedy well, and has left a rich and a happy widow [6]. The Chan-

[1] Catherine-Charlotte de Gramont, sister of the Comte de Guiche.

[2] Marie-Charlotte de Castelnau, sister-in-law of the Comte.

[3] Relict of the late Chancellor Séguier, and grandmother of the Comtesse de Guiche.

[4] Marguerite-Louise-Suzanne de Bethune-Sully.

[5] Charlotte Séguier, mother of the Comtesse de Guiche: she first married the Duc de Sully, and afterwards Henri de Bourbon, Duc de Verneuil.

[6] She was married afterwards to the Duc du Lude, in 1681. The Comte de Guiche had been the lover of Henrietta of England. He

cellor's lady is so fully sensible, she says, of the little happiness this poor lady must have had in her marriage, that she thinks of nothing but repairing this misfortune. We are at a loss for a proper match for her. You will perhaps name for her M. de Marsillac, as we did; but they do not like each other: the other Ducs are too young. M. de Foix is destined for Mademoiselle de Roquelaure. Think a little for us, for the affair is pressing. I have sent you, my dear child, a tedious account, but you sometimes tell me you like minuteness.

The Orange business sounds well here for M. de Grignan. The great number of the nobility that followed him solely on account of their attachment to him, the vast expense, and happy termination, are a great honour to M. de Grignan, and a great joy to his friends, who are not inconsiderable here: this general approbation is very gratifying. The King said at supper, "Orange is taken; Grignan had seven hundred gentlemen with him; they fired from within the walls, and the third day they surrendered. I am very well pleased with Grignan." This was repeated to me; La Garde can recite it with greater exactness.

As for your Archbishop of Rheims, I do not know what to make of him. La Garde mentioned to him the expense. "This is always the story," said he; "people love to complain."—"But, Sir," said La Garde, "M. de Grignan could not avoid being at a great expense, considering the number of gentlemen who assembled for his sake."—"You should say, for the service of the King."—"That is true, Sir," said he, "but it was all voluntary; their design was to oblige M. de Grignan by serving the King."—But, my dear, this is nothing; you know he is in other respects a good friend; but there are days when the spleen prevails, and those days are unlucky. Say nothing to me against your letters. We sometimes think our letters are bad, because we have a thousand confused

also entered into the intrigues of M. de Vardes. He had made a brilliant campaign in Poland, and to him was owed the passage of the Rhine. He was as handsome and witty as he was brave.

ideas: but this confusion is in the head, while the letter is clear and natural: this is the character of yours, and they are sometimes so entertaining, that those to whom I do the honour of showing them are quite delighted.

I have news from our States of Brittany. The Marquis de Coëtquen has thought fit to attack M. d'Harouïs; he was pleased to say, that he alone was rich, while all Brittany was oppressed with poverty; and that he knew persons much fitter to fill that post than he. M. de Boucherat, M. de Lavardin, and the whole Province, were ready to stone him; they were perfectly struck with horror at his ingratitude, for he owes a thousand obligations to M. d'Harouïs. In consequence of this, he has received a letter from Madame de Rohan, ordering him to go to Paris, as M. de Chaulnes was commissioned to forbid him to be present at the States: so he disappeared the evening before the Governor arrived; and he remains in disgrace there for his wicked accusation against M. d'Harouïs. This, my dear, is what your title of Governor's Lady of Brittany obliges me to inform you of.

I have just seen M. de Pomponne: he was alone. I was two hours with him and Mademoiselle Lavocat, who is very pretty: we read some of your letters with pleasure. You are admired both for your style and the interest you take in certain affairs. M. de Pomponne easily understood what it was we desired of him. Were I to tell you the many handsome and obliging things that were said of you, and the delightful conversations I have had with this minister, not all the paper in my desk would suffice. I am perfectly satisfied with him, and I desire you to be so upon my account of him; he will be much pleased to see you, and depends much upon your return. Adieu, my dear child; I expect your brother every day; and I wish for letters from you every hour.

LETTER 271

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, December 11, 1673.

I am just returned from St.-Germain, where I have been two whole days with Madame de Coulanges at M. de La Rochefoucauld's. In the evening we went to pay our court to the Queen, who said a thousand obliging things to me of you: but if I were to enumerate all the how-d'ye-do's and compliments that I had, both from men and women, old and young, who crowd about me to inquire after you, I should have to name the whole Court. "And how does Madame de Grignan do? and when will she return?" and so on. In short, only figure me to yourself, in the midst of a crowd of idle people, who, having nothing else to do, would everyone ask me some question, so that I was frequently obliged to answer twenty at once. I dined with Madame de Louvois: it was who should be the first to invite me. I would have returned yesterday, but we were stopped by force to sup with M. de Marsillac in his enchanting apartments with Madame de Thianges, Madame Scarron, the Duc, M. de La Rochefoucauld, M. de Vivonne, and a band of heavenly music. This morning, with much ado, we got away.

A quarrel of a singular nature is the news of the day at St.-Germain. The Chevalier de Vendôme, and M. de Vivonne, are the lovers of Madame de Ludres. The Chevalier expressed a wish of compelling M. de Vivonne to resign his pretensions. But on what grounds? he was asked. Why, he would fight M. de Vivonne. They laughed at him. It was, however, no joke, he said; he would fight him: and he mounted his horse, to take the field. But the best of the story was Vivonne's reply to the person who brought him the challenge. He was confined to his room by a wound in his arm, and receiving the

condolence of the whole Court, ignorant of the threat of his rival. "I, gentlemen," said he, "I fight! He may fight if he pleases, but I defy him to make me fight. Let him get his shoulder broken, let the surgeon make twenty incisions in his arm, and then"—it was thought he was going to say, *we will fight*—"and then," said he, "perhaps we may be friends. But the man must be jesting to think of firing at me! A pretty project, truly! he might as well fire at the door of a house[1]. I repent, however, having saved his life in crossing the Rhine, and will do no more such generous actions, till I have the nativity cast of those I intend to assist. Would any one have thought, when I was remounting this fellow on his horse, that a few weeks afterwards he would want to shoot me through the head for my kindness?" This speech, from the tone and manner in which it was delivered, had so droll an effect, that nothing else is talked of at St.-Germain.

I found your siege of Orange very much magnified at Court: the King had spoken of it very agreeably, and it was thought highly honourable to M. de Grignan, that, without the King's order, and merely to follow him, seven hundred gentlemen should have assembled upon the occasion; for the King having said *seven hundred,* every one else said *seven hundred*; it was added, with a laugh, that two hundred litters also followed him; but it is thought, seriously, that few Governors could have obtained such a retinue.

I have had two hours' conversation at two different times with M. de Pomponne. He exceeds my most sanguine hopes. Mademoiselle Lavocat is in our confidence: she is a very amiable girl. She knows all our affairs—the business of the Syndic, of the Procurator, our gratuity, opposition, deliberation, etc., as well as she does the map of the empire, and the interest of Princes; that is, she has them at her finger's end: we call her the *little minister.* We have interludes in our conversations, which M. de Pomponne calls flashes of rhetoric to secure the good

[1] M. de Vivonne was excessively corpulent.

humour of the audience. There are some points in your letters I cannot reply to: we often answer ridiculously when we write from such a distance. You know how grieved we once were at the loss of some town, when they had been rejoicing for ten days at Paris because the Prince of Orange had raised the siege: but this is one of the evils of distance. Adieu, my beloved child: I embrace you very affectionately.

LETTER 272

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, December 15, 1673.

When I told you, my dear child, that you would not be the less esteemed here for not having interest enough to elect a Syndic of your own, and endeavoured to make the gaining that point of as little consequence as possible, be assured it was the effect of mere policy, and of a premeditated design between us here, that in case you failed, you might not hang yourself for vexation; but now that I find by your letter you have gained the victory, and have come off triumphant, I will candidly own to you, that it is the most fortunate circumstance in the world that you have carried your point in spite of the vigilance, precaution, entreaties, menaces, solicitations, bribes, and boastings, of your enemies: it is in truth delightful, and shows, as well as the affair of Orange, how highly M. de Grignan is esteemed in his Province. M. de Pomponne, d'Hacqueville, Brancas, the Grignans, and many of your friends were particularly anxious about the issue of this affair; and were far from considering it in so indifferent a light as I wished you to think they did. But this was only put on, as I told you before, to support your courage in case of a defeat. Mademoiselle Lavocat is full of this business; and, to tell you the truth, I have sent the first two sheets

of your letter to M. de Pomponne, and d'Hacqueville, who was with him, for the purpose of giving them pleasure. Do not think, therefore, that we see things so very differently from you: everything in which honour is concerned is seen alike in all countries. Be not angry with us; applaud our good intentions; and believe that we are fully of your opinion, and I in particular, who have no other.

You give me sufficiently to understand the obstacles that may obstruct your journey to Paris; but when I reflect that the Coadjutor is ready to set out, he who had disposed of his Abbey for two years, who was for turning off all his servants and his horses, to live a retired country life, and taste the sweets of a pure air; when I see him, I say, ready to obey the summons, and exert a kind of magic art against all objections; I cannot help expecting something of the same kind from you; and this year or never. This is how I reason: you will be victorious in every respect, and will thoroughly efface the exclusion of your friend at last.

I dined yesterday with the Duc, M. de La Rochefoucauld, Madame de Thianges, Madame de La Fayette, Madame de Coulanges, the Abbé Têtu, M. de Marsillac, and Guilleragues, at Gourville's. You were celebrated there, and much wished for by all parties. After dinner we were entertained with Despréaux's *Art of Poetry*: it is a masterpiece [1]. M. de La Rochefoucauld has obtained no other favour than a good situation for his son: he called the other day at Madame de Montespan's, when there was a concert; they insisted upon his staying; could they avoid it? Madame de La Fayette sees Madame de Montespan for a quarter of an hour, when she goes once a month to St.-Germain: this is no great favour, in my opinion. The Chevalier de Vendôme has desired quarter of M. de Vivonne, who has never ceased lashing him for his misplaced courage, but always by declaring his own aversion to fighting: it has been granted, and they are reconciled, and no

[1] This admirable work, begun in 1669, did not appear till 1674.

more is said of the affair. Soyecourt [1] asked Vivonne yesterday, when the King was to go a hunting. "When," replied Vivonne [2] smartly, "are the galleys to sail?" I am upon very good terms with the General; he does not think he will have the Swiss Generalship [3]: he said as I did, that they were *speaking arms.* Madame de La Vallière talks no more of retiring; it is enough to have said it once: besides, her *femme-de-chambre* fell at her feet to dissuade her from it; and then, you know, there was no resisting.

D'Hacqueville is just returned from stabbing Madame la Maréchale de Gramont with the news of the death of the Comte de Guiche; and is himself so much affected at it, that he is quite unfit for company: I much doubt whether he will write to you to-day. La Garde constantly wishes you to come, even without M. de Grignan; and as to that, I refer you to the black art of the Coadjutor, of which I before told you: you are clever, and will act a different character from that of a lady of eighteen. Corbinelli is here; he is as anxious about your affairs as he was at Grignan. We shall be transported with joy at the Syndic, and when we have carried it with a high hand, they may talk of reconciliation as much as they please: we must be mild and gentle after victory. Despréaux will enchant you with his verses; he seems greatly affected at the situation of poor Chapelain. I tell him he is tender in prose, but very cruel in verse [4]. Adieu, my dearest child. How much should I be obliged to you, if you would come and embrace me! There is a great noise at our States in Brittany. You are wiser than we are. Bussy has had orders to return to Burgundy; he has not been able to make peace with his principal enemies; he continues obstinately bent upon marrying his daughter

[1] He was *grand-veneur* or chief huntsman to the King.

[2] He was General of the galleys.

[3] See Letter 268, of December 1, 1673, in this volume.

[4] See Despréaux's ninth Satire, where he lashes Chapelain most unmercifully.

to the Comte de Limoges [1]: it is like joining hunger and thirst together; but he is enchanted with the name. I expect my son every moment.

LETTER 273

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Livry, Monday, December 18, 1673.

I expect your letters with real impatience. I cannot be easy till the Marquis de Buous [2] is confirmed Syndic: I am in great hopes of it; but as I am strangely subject to fears, I should be heartily glad it were decided. I saw M. de Pomponne for two hours at Paris: he bears very patiently my long conversations, and appears to like the medley of which they are composed: he does not scruple to say that he wishes M. de Buous to be Syndic, that it appears to him to be just and reasonable, and that M. de Grignan would have great cause of complaint if, after what has passed at Court, he had this mortification to endure in Provence. He likes your letters, he esteems and admires you; he sees plainly the power you have in Provence over the nobility, the Parliament, and the different communities, and will take care to represent it in a proper place.

M. de Louvigny and many others are returned: it is said he complains that the *Torrent* has destroyed the good conduct of the *Dew* [3], and given her a manner very different from the proper affection which so well became her. La Troche, who is arrived, desires me to say a thousand pretty things for her; write something kind for me to show her. Except by Madame la Maréchale de Gra-

[1] Charles François de Rochechouart, son of the Marquis de Chandenier, who had been first Captain in the King's body-guard.

[2] N**** de Pontevez, Marquis de Buous, first cousin of M. de Grignan.

[3] Apparently this *Dew* means his wife; and in that case the *Torrent* must be Madame de Monaco her sister.

mont, the Comte de Guiche is already forgotten, it is a fact that the *Torrent* has resumed her usual course: this is a good country for forgetting people. I have very much commended to Mademoiselle de Scuderi the handsome proceeding of M. de Péruis. Guitaud has dined with me; La Troche and Coulanges were also here; your health was drank, but your policy in wishing to add more years to the three you have already spent in Provence, was thought somewhat extraordinary. It is a fine thing to suffer yourself to be effaced and forgotten in a place where you have business daily, and from whence you derive all your consequence. You may wish also to enjoy that which you obtain in your government, and one conduces to the other; but you ought to endeavour principally to be well here.

I have received your letter of the tenth: I think I have answered it beforehand, by assuring you that you will meet with nothing here to injure you; but why do you not finish quickly? why do you not make haste to remove this thorn from our feet and your own? we shall share with you in the joy of your triumph. The *Rain*[1] joined with me in opinion, the other day, that nothing in life so sensibly affects us as what concerns our honour; and we concluded, like the Bishop of Agen, that this could proceed from nothing but the most profound humility. I assure you, no one can enter more cordially into your interests, nor understand them better, than our worthy *Rain*: ah! how many laughable things I said to him, and how kindly he listened to me! He waits with impatience to hear the end of your Syndical. He will be very much amused at your letter. Since you repeat some of my sentences, I must repeat to you this of yours, which is worth an empire: "If His Majesty would but have the goodness to let us tear one another's eyes out, he would find that he would be much better served." You will neither be angry with me then, nor with the Court, since you have your elbows at liberty with respect to the Syndical, but

[1] A fictitious name for M. de Pomponne.

pray terminate the affair, and let us have a letter to put us out of suspense.

You will be surprised, perhaps, to hear that you were spoken of for a *dame du palais*. I tell you so, however; and that is sufficient. You are held in great esteem in places that we esteem most. Seek some other excuse, then, when you threaten me with not returning again to this country. I understand the fineness of your weather; I see it from hence, and remember it with tender emotion: we are now starved with cold; in a short time we shall be drowned. It is certain, my dear, that my journey into Provence has attached me to you more than ever. I had never seen you so long together, never enjoyed your mind and heart so fully; I neither see nor feel anything but what I tell you, and pay severely for my past delights. D'Hacqueville is in the right to say he wishes to experience no such sensations. For my part, I should be very well satisfied, if God would but give me grace to love him more than I love you; but I assure you, this circumstance of robbing the Creator to pay the creature, is the source of uneasy reflections to me. The *Rain* and I talked very seriously upon this subject yesterday: good heavens, how delighted I am with this *Rain*! and I believe he is no less so with me; we find pleasure in renewing our former connections.

All our German heroes are coming back, and I expect Sévigné continually. Embrace M. de Grignan for me; he would be charmed to hear me talk of him sometimes; he has a fine figure, and I detail his excellent qualities with pleasure. Adieu, my dear Comtesse.

LETTER 274

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, December 22, 1673.

A piece of political news is just come into my head; and, contrary to my custom, I shall give it you. You

know the King of Poland [1] is dead. The Grand Maréchal [2], the husband of Mademoiselle d'Arquien, is at the head of an army against the Turks; he has lately gained so complete a victory over them, that fifteen thousand were left dead on the field of battle, two bashaws are taken prisoners, and he himself occupies their General's tent. After so distinguished a victory, it is not in the least doubted that he will be declared King, especially as he is at the head of such an army, and that fortune generally declares in favour of numerous battalions. This piece of news has given me pleasure.

I never now see the Chevalier de Buous. He is enraged at not being made a *chef d'escadre* [3]. He is at St.-Germain, and I am in hopes he will manage his affairs so well as to obtain his desire at last: I sincerely wish it. The Archbishop (of Arles) has written to assure me of the joy the affair of Orange has given him, and that he hopes that of the Syndical will end no less happily. He finds himself obliged to own, by the event, that your vigour was of more service than his prudence, and that from your example he is become a perfect bravo. This has rejoiced me exceedingly.

And now, my dear child, when I picture you to myself pale and thin, when I think of the agitations you endure, and that the slightest degree of fever endangers your life, I suffer night and day from apprehensions for you. What happiness would it be to have you with me, in a less destructive climate, in your native air, which would again restore you to health and vigour! I am surprised that loving you as the Provençals do, they do not urge this remedy to you. I consider you as having been so useful till now, and as having relieved M. de Grignan so

[1] Michel Koribut Wiesnovieski, who died November, 1673.

[2] Jean Sobieski, elected King of Poland, May 20, 1674. He married the grand-daughter of Maréchal d'Arquien, who, after his death, returned to France. The victory Sobieski gained in 1685 under the walls of Vienna, and which saved the Emperor and the Empire, is still more celebrated than that which is here spoken of.

[3] A rank somewhat inferior to that of an English Rear-Admiral.

much in all his affairs, that I dare not regret I did not bring you with me: but when everything is finished, why not give me this satisfaction? Adieu, my dearest child, I am very impatient to hear from you: you would throw yourself into the fire, you say, to convince me of your love: my child, I have no doubt of your affection, and without this extraordinary proof of it, you may give me a much more pleasing, and a much more convincing one.

LETTER 275

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Sunday, December 24, 1673.

It is a long time, my dear, since I have felt joy equal to that I experienced at eleven o'clock last night. I was at Madame de Coulanges' when word was brought me that Janet[1] had arrived. I immediately hastened home, and the moment I saw him, flew to embrace him, and, half out of breath, exclaimed, "Well, have we a Syndic? is it M. de Buous?"—"Yes, Madame, it is M. de Buous."—I was transported. The next thing was, to read your letters; that done, I immediately sent to d'Hacqueville, to acquaint him that everything had succeeded to our utmost wishes, and that M. du Janet had arrived. D'Hacqueville returned me a long note, wishing me joy, and expressing his own. M. du Janet and I had a little conversation together, after which we supped, and then he retired; as for me, I did not close my eyes till past four o'clock: joy is no great composer of the senses. M. de Pomponne was with me yesterday. This is all I have to tell you at present; but between this and to-morrow when I send away my packet, I shall probably have much to add to it.

By eight o'clock this morning my reception room was full; La Garde, the Abbé de Grignan, the Chevalier de Bu-

[1] A gentleman of Provence, very much attached to the Grignan family.

ous, the *Worthy* [1], M. de Coulanges, Corbinelli, and others, all talking, reasoning, and reading your accounts, which are indeed admirable. Never, surely, was there a more delightful termination: ah! what success! what success! could we have thought this at Grignan? The most we hoped for was a suspension: and yet, contrary to all belief, one little month has overturned the project of a whole year, and that a formidable project too, since it was backed with offers of money. I cannot but admire the Consul of Colmar, who, in return for the great services you rendered him last year, failed you at the only time you wanted him: I hope, my dear, you will let this little instance of ingratitude be inserted in the book we wish to write in praise of that virtue.

We cannot but own the good Bishop to be very skillful, he always keeps on the right side; finding your party too strong for him, and that you would doubtless name Buous, he names Buous likewise. All your friends here are of opinion that you should now alter your style, and be as modest after victory, as you were bold during the contest. It is La Garde who makes me act in the affair of your leave of absence; I assure you I have nothing to do with it further than as I am prompted by him; I refer you to his letter, you will see his arguments: you know him well, and that, like another M. de Montausier,

> Pour le Saint-Père, il ne diroit
> Une chose qu'il ne croiroit [2].

You are in high fortune, but still you must think a little of this part of the world, as well as of Provence. You will never meet with such another year, on account of the interest I have at present. I should be very sorry to be treated here as I was at Lambesc, when in the name of a friendship of eight years, which M. de Marseilles had

[1] The Abbé de Coulanges.

[2] For the Holy Father himself, he would not say a thing he did not believe. [Translation.]

talked so much of, and of the good terms upon which he had always been with the Grignans, I asked him to allow me to pay the courier, and he would not consent; and when I went to the Controller to conjure him to write instantly by your courier, you know how flatly he refused it: I have these two little things on my heart, and yet I do not wish the interest of the allies to prevent you from making peace. As soon as I left Lambese, the courier was paid, the Controller loaded him with packets; my child, I am unfortunate: God will not permit me, in my extreme desire to serve you, the happiness of succeeding. In reality, the lucky mine of the Coadjutor, which brought Abbeys and all kinds of good fortune, has been the most profitable to you. I know not how he disposed of his natural indolence during this affair; he seemed to have sent it a great way off, and his vigilance, application, foresight, expedients, courage, and judgment, were of the highest advantage to you. I had always great confidence in him; but, what wonders have you not effected? and how gloriously, too, has my dear Comte behaved? In short, you have all three played your parts to admiration. Ten or twelve persons sent to me daily for news of the Syndical; accordingly I have been obliged to dispatch no less than ten notes this morning, to Madame de Verneuil, the Bishop of Meaux, Madame de La Troche, M. de Brancas, Madame de Villars, Madame de La Fayette, M. de La Rochefoucauld, M. de Coulanges, and the Abbé Têtu; all of whom would have been offended, if I had not acquainted them with an event in which they seemed to take so much interest.

I must now go to confession, for the happy termination of this affair has restored my mind and softened my heart; I am as meek as a lamb; and the Father will be so far from refusing me absolution, that he will give me two, if I ask it. I am persuaded you have not been neglectful of this duty on your side.

(*Continuation of the preceding letter*).

Monday, Christmas-Day.

Ha! ha! mighty well indeed! what, are we got back to our lamentations for the Comte de Guiche? Why, my dear child, he is in a manner forgotten: nobody thinks about him, not even the Maréchal, who goes to Court again as usual. As for your Princesse (de Monaco), after what she has already forgotten (Lauzun), there is no great danger, as you say, of her dying of grief. Madame de Louvigny and her husband are delighted: the Comtesse de Guiche would be glad not to marry again; but there are great temptations in a *tabouret*. The Maréchal's lady is the only one who grieves; and she grieves sincerely.

You will by this time have received two or three of my letters, full of uneasiness about the Syndical, at which you cannot but smile; but then in return I have this of yours about the Comte de Guiche; and so set one against the other, and we are quits: absence and distance naturally produce these anachronisms. But to business.

M. du Janet has gone this evening to St.-Germain, that he may be there at the arrival of M. de Pomponne to-morrow; I have written a long letter to that Minister, in which I beg him to remark how highly you stand with the nobility, parliament, and commons, of your Province, and to do you all the good offices on that score which can alone be done by a person in his position. I have spoken to some intelligent people about the silence of the *Sea*[1]; they imagine it only proceeds from want of thought, and that he cannot but be pleased at the taking of Orange, since the *North*[2] seems to be so. I would not have you think that the brother[3] of the *Sea* is so fond of him as to adopt all his sentiments; every one speaks his own language and follows his own whims, so you are not to care for any thing that has been said by the brother. The gentleman you mention to me is misinformed; the *Sea* is better than

[1] M. de Louvois.

[2] M. Colbert.

[3] The Archbishop of Rheims.

ever, and there has been no material change in this part of the world. Madame de Coulanges and two or three female friends have been to see the *Thaw*[1] in her great house, but they saw no one else[2]. I intend to go there myself some day, and then I will let you know all that is to be known. What you write me about your growing weary of being no longer agitated by hatred, is very whimsical; your employment is taken away, and now you are at a loss what to do. Sleep, sleep; you can do nothing better. M. du Janet tells me you hardly ever close your eyes. Think above all things, my dear child, of the re-establishment of your health.

LETTER 276

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Thursday, December 28, 1673.

I begin my letter to-day, but I shall not finish it till to-morrow. My first subject shall be your journey to Paris. You will find by Janet, that La Garde is the person who thinks it most necessary for you to come, and has even said, that it was advisable to solicit for permission: perhaps he may have already obtained it, for Janet has seen M. de Pomponne. But you say there is no necessity for coming; and then you proceed to give me such strong reasons against it, and make everything appear so inconsiderable, that others laid the greatest stress upon to enforce this journey, that I am quite overwhelmed: I know with what force you argue, my dear child, and I have not the power to contradict you, especially when you ask me, "if it is possible that I, who ought to consider more than any other person the plan of life you have laid down, would embark you in an expense which may give a great shock to the weight which even now you are scarcely able to

[1] Madame Scarron.

[2] That is, the King's children did not appear, to whom Madame Scarron had lately been appointed governess.

support," and so on. No, my love, I would not do you so much injury; God forbid! and while you show an example of reason, wisdom, and philosophy itself, far be it from me to give occasion to the world to accuse me of being a foolish, fond, and inconsiderate parent, who, for the sake of a little gratification to herself, and through excess of womanish tenderness, would prevent you from following the rectitude of your heart, and overturn and ruin the most prudent and rational schemes. But I thought you would be able to take this journey, as you promised me; and when I consider the expenses you must necessarily be at while at Aix, in balls, plays, entertainments, and feasts, during the carnival, I cannot but think that it would cost you less to come here, especially as you will have no occasion to bring anything with you. M. de Pomponne and M. de La Garde have pointed out a thousand little affairs, in which your presence and M. de Grignan's will be absolutely necessary, not to mention that of the guardianship. I am ready to receive you. My heart fondly indulges in the pleasing hope you are not with child, and you stand in need of change of air. I even flattered myself that M. de Grignan would have left you with me this summer, and have saved you the fatigue of two months' travelling in one year, as if you had the robustness of a man. All your friends agreed that I had every reason to expect you with impatience: these were my motives; but these, all these, my dear, appear to you false and ill-judged; I yield then to necessity and the force of reasoning, and will endeavour, to the best of my power, to follow your example and submit. I will look upon it as a punishment inflicted upon me by heaven for my sins; a greater could not well be found, nor one that would so effectually reach my heart. But I must make the sacrifice that is required at my hands, and resolve to pass the remainder of my life separated from the only person in the world who is truly dear to me, the only one who completely suits my taste, my inclination, my heart, and who loves me better than ever. But all this must be given up to God, and I

will do it, with His grace assisting me, and with a becoming adoration of His Providence, which has seen fit to join to the pleasing reflections of the happy and flourishing situation you hold, the poignant stings of absence and separation. These are my sentiments: they are not exaggerated, they are simple and sincere; I will make the sacrifice for my salvation. The conflict is over, and I will not say a word more upon the subject, but meditate incessantly on the invincible force of your arguments, and on your wisdom, which, while I praise, I will endeavour to imitate.

Janet went to M. de Pomponne at Port-Royal; let him tell you the manner in which he was received, and the pleasure that Minister expressed at hearing that M. de Buous was chosen. I leave Janet the pleasure of informing you of it, by a letter he has written to his wife. I have received a note from Madame d'Herbigny [1], who enters into the affairs of Provence more than any one: she is very amiable, and very obliging; she wished to know the affair of the Syndical and the guards, and this is an answer on the subject of the latter. She thought I had pleased her brother as much as herself, and when I told her how little he liked me, and how firmly he refused me last year a thing which he did himself this year without scruple, she could not help uttering exclamations of surprise: she cannot comprehend that her sister-in-law can have declared in favour of your enemies, after all your civility to her: she remembers, as the highest compliment, what you said of M. de Rouillé, that justice is his ruling passion; in reality, it is the handsomest thing that can be said of a man of his profession.

There is no sort of finesse in the manner in which M. de La Rochefoucauld, his son, *Quantova* [2], her friend [3] and her friend's friend [4], are at Court; there is no tie between

[1] Sister of M. Rouillé de Mélai, Controller of Provence.

[2] Madame de Montespan.

[3] Madame Scarron.

[4] Madame de Coulanges.

them; the son [1] is handsomely lodged; it was all done under the pretence of a supper: he is, as you know, on very good terms with the *North* [2], but not more so than usual; his father does not go to that part of the world once in a month, neither does Madame de Coulanges. There is not the least view or design in any thing: this is a fact. I scarcely ever see Langlade. I know not what he is doing, nor has he seen Corbinelli: I wonder if this is owing to his political fears.

I made all your *animosities,* as you drolly call them, to Corbinelli, and they were very well received by him. I fancy he is come here to awaken a little the affections of his old friends. My son is just arrived, so I shall close this letter, and we will write to you both together to-morrow, and fill it full of news that I shall hear at St.-Germain. It is said that the Maréchal de Gramont will not see Louvigny or his wife; they came here from their country seat, about ten leagues off. We think no more of the Comte de Guiche now, than if there had never been such a person in the world; you certainly laugh at us with your tedious grief; we should never have done mourning, if we were to dwell so long upon every fresh occurrence of this kind that happens here. We are expeditious in these matters; be you so too.

LETTER 277

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, December 29, 1673.

M. de Luxembourg is a little pressed near Maëstricht, by the army of M. de Monterei [3] and the Prince of Orange; he dares not venture to remove his camp, and he must perish where he is, unless they send him speedy and effectual

[1] The Prince de Marsillac.

[2] Monsieur Colbert.

[3] Governor of the Spanish Low-countries.

succour. The Prince is to set out four days hence with the Duc and M. de Turenne; the latter is to serve under the two Princes, and there is a perfectly good understanding between the three. They have twenty thousand foot and ten thousand horse; the volunteers and those companies which are not to march, do not go, but all the rest do. La Trousse and my son, who arrived here yesterday, are to be of the number: they have scarcely had time to pull off their boots before they are in the mud again: the rendezvous is to be at Charleroi on the sixteenth of January. D'Hacqueville has written you of this, but you will read it more distinctly in my letter [1]. It is certainly very important news, and has occasioned a great bustle everywhere. We know not what to do for money. It is certain that M. de Turenne is not on terms with M. de Louvois, but it is not generally known; and while he continues to keep in with M. Colbert, there will be nothing said about it. This afternoon I had some great folks with me, who desired their compliments to M. de Grignan, and to *Grignan's wife.* They were the Grand-Master, and the *Charmer* [2]; I had besides, Brancas, the Archbishop of Rheims, Charost, La Trousse, and others, who all in like manner desired to be remembered to you. They talk of nothing but war. The *Charmer* knows all our affairs, and enters admirably into our little perplexities. He is Governor of a Province, which is sufficient to give him an idea of our feelings on those subjects. Adieu, my dearest child. I participate in all the joys of your conquests.

Monsieur DE SÉVIGNÉ *also writes to his Sister in his Mother's Letter.*

I arrived yesterday noon, and the first news I heard was that we were to set out again immediately for Charleroi; what do you say to this pretty arrangement? We

[1] M. d'Hacqueville's handwriting was always very difficult to be read.

[2] The Comte du Lude and the Duc de Villeroi.

storm, we swear, but are obliged to go notwithstanding. Our spruce courtiers are just at their wit's end about it. They had formed the finest plans in the world for passing their time agreeably in Paris, after an absence of twenty months; and now their projects are all overturned. I had much rather have gone to assist M. de Grignan in his siege of Orange than go to the north; why did he finish his duel so soon? I am vexed that he had so prompt a victory.

I do not know whether you complain of me still, but I am sure the fault is yours; you owe me several letters; but I forgive you, in consideration of the multiplicity of affairs you have had on your hands, and on such occasions only I allow you to forget a *guidon*. Ridiculous title! after a man has had it for five years. Adieu, my pretty little sister. You imagine, I suppose, that I think of nothing but rest and amusement; pardon me, my dear: are my horses ready? are my boots ready? I want a better hat, *piglia lo su signor monsu*. This is all I have said since I arrived in Paris. Has it the appearance of a return, after an eight months' campaign?

LETTER 278

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, New Year's Day, 1674.

I wish you a Happy Year, my child; and in this wish I comprehend so many things, that I should never have done, if I were to enumerate them. I have not yet asked leave for you to return to Paris, as you feared; but I wish you had heard what La Garde said of the necessity of your coming hither, that you may not lose your five thousand francs, and of what he thinks proper for M. de Grignan to say to the King. If it were a suit which you were obliged to solicit against anyone who designed to injure you, you would doubtless come to solicit it; but as it is to

come to a place where you have a thousand other affairs, you are both guilty of the greatest indolence. Ah! what an enchanting thing is indolence! you feel its power too much; read La Garde upon this subject, chapter the first. Consider in the meantime, that you would have the pleasure of seeing the King, and receiving his approbation.

The edicts are revoked which gave us so much uneasiness in our Province. The day that M. de Chaulnes declared it to the States there was a cry of *Long live the King*, which made everyone present weep for joy; they embraced each other, broke out into the highest expressions of rapture, ordered *Te Deum* to be sung, made bonfires; and the thanks of the public were given to M. de Chaulnes. But do you know what we are to give the King as a mark of our gratitude? Two millions six hundred thousand livres, and as much more by way of a voluntary gratuity. It is just five millions, two hundred thousand livres. What think you of this little sum? You may judge by this of the favour that has been done us, in taking off the burden of these edicts.

My poor son is arrived here, as you know; he is to return on Thursday, with many others. M. de Monterei is a very clever fellow; he disturbs the whole world; he fatigues the army, and puts it out of a condition to take the field, and begin the campaign, till the end of the spring. The troops were all at ease in winter-quarters; and when, after a tedious march, they are arrived at Charleroi, he has only a single step to take to make good his retreat: till when, M. de Luxembourg cannot be extricated. By appearances, the King will not set out so soon as he did last year. If, when in the field, we had to make an attack on some great town, or the enemy would come out and oppose our two heroes, as we should probably beat him, peace might almost be depended upon. This is what is said by persons of the profession. It is certain that M. de Turenne is out of favour with M. de Louvois; but as he is in favour with the King and M. Colbert, it has not made much noise.

Five Ladies of the Palace are appointed: Madame de Soubise, Madame de Chevreuse, the Princesse d'Harcourt, Madame d'Albret, and Madame de Rochefort; the Maids of Honour are to serve no more, and Madame de Richelieu as a Lady of Honour is also discharged. There are to be only the Gentlemen in Waiting, and the *maîtres d'hôtel,* as formerly. But that the Queen may not be without women, Madame de Richelieu and four other ladies are to wait constantly behind her chair. Brancas is in raptures that his daughter [1] is so well provided for.

The Grand Maréchal of Poland has sent a letter to the King, in which he tells His Majesty, that if he has any person in view to raise to the crown of Poland, he will assist him with all the forces under his command; and if not, requests his protection and assistance for himself: the King has promised it to him; however, it is imagined he will not get himself elected, because he is not of the established religion of the nation.

The devotion of La Marans is the most sincere and unaffected you ever beheld; she is perfection itself, she is all divine; I have not yet seen her, for which I hate myself: a certain female acquaintance of hers told her that M. de Longueville had a real affection for her, and that he had prophesied she would become a saint. This made such an impression on her, that she immediately set about a reform in her life, resolving, if possible, to fulfill the prediction.

There is nothing to be seen of the little Princes [2]. The eldest has been three days with papa and mamma; he is very pretty, but no one has seen him. I embrace you, my dearest child. I will see if anything can be done for your friend, who has so generously killed a fellow-creature.

[1] The Princesse d'Harcourt.

[2] The King's children by Madame de Montespan.

LETTER 279

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, January 5, 1674.

It is a year ago this very day, since we supped with the Archbishop: at this moment perhaps you are supping with the Controller: I am afraid, my dear child, your mirth is feigned. All you say on this subject to me, and to Corbinelli, is admirable. My heart thanks you for the good opinion you have of me, in believing I hold in abhorrence all villainous proceedings. You are not deceived.

M. de Grignan tells you true; Madame de Thianges has left off paint, and covers her neck; you would hardly know her in this disguise. She is frequently with Madame de Longueville, and is the very pink of the modish devotion. But she is still good company, and has not at all the air of a recluse. I dined with her the other day; a servant brought her a glass of liqueur; she turned to me, and said, "The fellow does not know that I am become a dévotee;" this made us all laugh. She spoke very naturally of her intentions, and of her change. She is very cautious of saying any thing that may injure the reputation of her neighbour, and stops short when anything of that nature escapes her; for my part, I think her more agreeable than ever. Wagers are laid that the Princesse d'Harcourt will not turn nun these twelve months, now she is become a Lady of the Palace, and paints again: this rouge is the law and the prophets; it is the great point that our new devotion turns upon. As for the Duchesse d'Aumont, her taste is burying the dead [1]. They say the Duchesse de Charost kills people

[1] If we may believe Bussy, she rendered service of a different kind to the living. The Duchesse of Charost was the daughter of the Chief-Controller Fouquet. She apparently had her recipes from her grandmother, of which we have a printed collection in two volumes, under the title of *Family Receipts by Madame Fouquet.*

for her, with ill-compounded medicines, and then buries them in a religious retreat. The Marquise d'Uxelles is very good; but La Marans is more than good. Madame de Schomberg tells me very seriously, that she is of the first order for seclusion and penitence, not admitting any society, and refusing even the amusements of devotion; in a word, she is a penitent in the true sense of the word, and in all the simplicity of the primitive church.

The Ladies of the Palace are kept in great subjection. The King has explained himself upon this subject, and will have the Queen always attended by them. Madame de Richelieu, though she does not serve any longer at table, is always present when the Queen dines, with four ladies, who wait by turns. The Comtesse d'Ayen[1] is the sixth: she does not like the confinement of this attendance, and of being constantly at vespers, sermons, and other religious ceremonies; but there is no perfect happiness in this world. The Marquise de Castelnau is fair, blooming, and perfectly recovered from her grief. *L'Eclair,* they say, has only changed her apartment at Court, not very much to her satisfaction. Madame de Louvigny does not seem sufficiently delighted at her good fortune. She is thought unpardonable for not adoring her husband in the same manner as when she was first married; this is the first time the public was ever offended at a thing of this nature. Madame de Brissac is beautiful, and follows the Princesse de Conti like her shadow. Madame de Coëtquen is still the same as ever. She has a petticoat of black velvet, embroidered with gold and silver, and a brocade cloak. This dress cost her an immense sum; and when she thought she made the most splendid figure imaginable, everyone said she was dressed like an actress; and she has been so much rallied in consequence, that she has thrown it aside. La Manierosa[2] is a little vexed at not being a Lady of the Palace. Madame de

[1] Marie-Françoise de Bournonville, afterwards Marquise de Noailles.

[2] A feigned name.

Duras, who would not accept this honour, laughs at her. La Troche is, as usual, very much interested in your affairs: but I cannot express how strongly Madame de La Fayette and M. de La Rochefoucauld have your interest at heart.

Madame de La Fayette and I went to see M. de Turenne a few days ago; he has a slight attack of the gout. He received us with great civility, and talked much of you. The Chevalier de Grignan has given him an account of your victories; he would have offered you his sword, if there had been any occasion for it. He intends to set out in three days. My son went yesterday very much out of humour: I was not less so, at this ill-judged and in every respect disagreeable journey.

The Dauphin saw Madame de Schomberg the other day; they told him his grandfather had been in love with her: he asked in a whisper, "How many children has she had by him?" They informed him of the manners [1] of that time.

The Duc du Maine [2] has been seen at Court, but he has not yet visited the Queen: he was in a coach, and saw only his father and mother.

The Chevalier de Châtillon has no longer anything to seek for; his fortune is made. Monsieur chose rather to give him the office of Captain of his Guards, than Mademoiselle de Grancey that of Lady of the Wardrobe. This young man therefore has the post of Vaillac, and is well provided for: they say Vaillac is to have d'Albon's, and that d'Albon is discarded. I told you how our States ended, and that they repurchased the edicts for five millions two hundred thousand and that the air was

[1] Madame de Schomberg who is here spoken of, mother of the Maréchal then living, captivated Louis XIII., when she was only a Maid of Honour, by the name of Mademoiselle d'Hautefort. The King's gallantry exacted so little, that she even jested upon the subject, and said he talked to her of nothing but dogs, horses, and hunting. She was handsome and discreet. She attached herself to Queen Anne of Austria, and shared her disgrace during the life of Louis XIII. She afterwards quarelled with her during the Regency, for having spoken too freely against Cardinal Mazarin.

[2] The King's eldest son by Madame de Montespan.

rent with cries of *Long live the King,* that we had bonfires, and sung *Te Deum,* because His Majesty was kind enough to accept it. Poor Sanzei is ill with the measles: it is a disorder that soon passes, but is alarming from its violence.

I see no reason to ask the King's pardon for the humane gentleman who was guilty of assassination: the crime is of too black a nature. The criminals who were pardoned at Rouen, were not of this stamp; it is the only crime the King refuses to pardon. So Beuvron has mentioned it to the Abbé de Grignan.

I have heard the Ladies at the Palace spoken of in a way that made me laugh. I said with Montaigne, "Let us avenge ourselves, by slandering them." It is however true, that they are under excessive subjection.

The report still prevails, that the Prince sets out on Monday. The same day M. de Saint Luc is to espouse Mademoiselle de Pompadour: about this I am quite indifferent.

Adieu, my dear; this letter is growing too long; I conclude it for no other reason, but because everything must have an end. I embrace Grignan, and beg him to forgive me for opening Madame de Guise's letter; I was very desirous to see her style; my curiosity is satisfied for ever.

Guilleragues said yesterday, that Pellisson abused the permission men have to be ugly [1].

LETTER 280

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, January 8, 1674.

Never did I read such delightful letters as yours, my beloved Comtesse; I have just been reading one, which has charmed me: I have heard you say, that I have a

[1] An expression that has become common, but which was new at that time, or it would not have been worth noticing.

way of giving an agreeable turn to the most trifling subjects. I am sure, my dear, I may with justice say it of you. There are five or six passages in your last letter, that have a brilliancy and sweetness that are irresistible. I do not know where I must begin to answer you.

I have a great inclination to talk to you about your fine sunshine, and your delightful walks. You may well say I am married a second time to Provence; I shall certainly make it one of my countries, provided you do not strike this out of the number of yours. You say a thousand kind things to me on the coming in of the New Year; you are everything to me, and my only study is, that people may not see in what degree you are dear to me. I have passed over the beginning of this year, without saying a syllable to you on the occasion; but be assured, my dear child, that this and every year of my life will be a continued chain of love, of which every link is devoted to you. You moralise admirably: it is certain, as you say, that Time flies everywhere, and flies swiftly. You exclaim against him, because he robs you of some portion of your youth and beauty; but he leaves you still a large share: for my part, I cannot behold his flight without horror, when I consider that he is every day bringing me nearer to old age, and, in the end, to death[1]. Of this nature are the reflections of a person at my time of life; join with me, my dear child, in praying that I may draw the proper conclusions from them that Christianity teaches.

This grand journey of the Prince and M. de Turenne, to relieve M. de Luxembourg, is come to nothing. M. de Monterei, finding his army somewhat incommoded in its situation, has made what they call a little retreat; so that M. de Luxembourg is once more at liberty. My son is the only one who set out: I never witnessed prudence, foresight, and impatience like his; he will have the trouble of returning, but that is nothing. All the other warriors are here. M. de Turenne has brought back a great many, and M. de Luxembourg will bring the rest. The Ladies

[1] Madame de Sévigné at this time was forty-eight years old.

of the Palace are to serve for a week: this subjection, of four waiting during dinner, is an unpleasant circumstance for ladies in the family way; they will be obliged to take midwives with them in their excursions with Her Majesty. Madame la Maréchale d'Humières [1] is very much disconcerted at being obliged to stand when others are sitting: if she pouts, she will pay her court badly, for the King will have submission. I believe it is made a jest of at *Quantova's*; it is certain there is a place, where no wife is separated from her husband or her duties. We like no noise, unless we make it ourselves. The new Princes have not yet made their appearance; some of them have been at Saint-Germain, but they have not yet been seen. There are plays and balls at Court every week. The King is to dance, and MONSIEUR is to lead out Mademoiselle de Blois [2], to avoid leading out MADEMOISELLE [3], whom he leaves for the Dauphin. Thursday next they play the new opera [4]; it is a most enchanting piece, there are some places where the music forced tears from me in spite of myself; I am not the only one who has been thus affected: Madame de La Fayette feels the strongest emotions at it.

I frequently see Corbinelli, who adores you, and enters fully into my sentiments for you, which does not a little add to my love for him. I have a great esteem for Barbantane [5]; I think him one of the bravest men in the world, nay even romantically so, as I have heard Bussy

[1] Louise-Antoinette-Thérèse de La Châtre, Maréchale d'Humières, was not a Duchesse till the year 1690.

[2] Marie-Anne de Bourbon, married afterwards, in 1680, to Louis-Armand de Bourbon, Prince of Conti.

[3] Daughter of MONSIEUR, afterwards, in 1679, Queen of Spain.

[4] *Cadmus,* written by Quinault, and set to music by Baptiste Lully.

[5] A man of quality in Provence attached to the Prince. Bussy, in his *Memoirs,* relates an extravagant action of this Barbantane. He was in 1647 at the siege of Lérida; he went into an old church, dug up a corpse that had been newly buried, brought it into the midst of his jovial companions, one of whom took the dead man by the other hand, and thus began to make him dance. A duel, in which one of the party was killed, interrupted these orgies, which were resumed again, after they had bewailed the unfortunate sufferer.

say a thousand times, who was his intimate friend; they were brothers in arms. I hope soon to have news of your peace being concluded. *Justitia et pax osculatæ sunt*[1]; do you understand Latin? You are very humorous! Adieu my child: you are no where forgotten. Your brother is convinced of your regard for him; and loves you with equal affection he says, and I believe him.

Monday, after having sent my packet to the Post.

D'Hacqueville is just arrived with a piece of news, which we wish you to know by this post. The Keeper of the Seals[2] is made Chancellor: nobody doubts that it is to give the seals to some other person. The news will be public in three or four days: it is of some importance, and will carry a great weight with its party.

The Prince sets out in two days, and M. de Turenne likewise, though suffering from the gout, in order to be in time at the rendezvous at Charleroi. It is not true that M. de Monterei has retired, nor that M. de Luxembourg is at liberty; we therefore revoke that report, and give you this in its stead.

LETTER 281

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, January 12, 1674.

Well, your peace is then concluded at last. The Archbishop of Rheims and Brancas received their letters before I did mine; M. de Pomponne sent to inform me of this important event from St.-Germain; I was ignorant however of the particulars, but now I know all. I advise you, my child, to regulate your conduct by circumstances; and since it is the King's will that you should be friendly

[1] Righteousness and peace have kissed each other. [Translation.]

[2] Etienne d'Aligre, son of Etienne d'Aligre, also Chancellor of France.

with the Bishop [1], endeavour to obey him. But to return to St.-Germain: I was there three days ago; I went first to M. de Pomponne's, who had not yet applied for your leave of absence, but is to send for it to-day. From thence we went to the Queen's; I was with Madame de Chaulnes; there was nobody to talk but me, and you may be sure I was not deficient. The Queen said without hesitation that you had been absent for more than three years, and that it was time for you to return. From Court we went to Madame Colbert's, who is extremely civil, and well bred. Mademoiselle de Blois [2] danced; she is very pleasing and graceful. *Desairs* says she is the only one who reminds him of you: he asked me what I thought of her dancing, for my applause was required, and I gave it with the greatest readiness. The Duchesse de La Vallière was there; she calls her little daughter *mademoiselle*, and the young Princesse in return calls her *pretty mamma*. M. de Vermandois was there too. No other children have yet made their appearance. We afterwards went to pay our respects to MONSIEUR and MADAME: the former has not forgotten you, and I never fail to present your dutiful acknowledgements to him. I met Vivonne there, who accosted me with, *"Little mamma,* I beg you will embrace the Governor of Champagne [3]."—"And pray who is he?" said I.—"Myself," replied he.—"You!" said I; "pray who told you so?"—"The King has just informed me of it." I instantly congratulated him. The Comtesse de Soissons was in hopes of getting this post for her son.

There is no talk of taking the seals from the Chancellor [4]; the good man was so surprised at this additional honour, that he began to fear a snake in the grass, and could not comprehend the reason of being thus loaded

[1] Of Marseilles.

[2] She had been educated by Madame Colbert.

[3] This government was vacated by the death of Eugène-Maurice de Savoie, Comte de Soissons, which happened June 7, 1673.

[4] Etienne d'Aligre was Keeper of the Seals in 1672, upon the death of Chancellor Séguier, who was made Chancellor of France in 1674.

with dignities: "Sire," said he to the King, "does Your Majesty intend to take the seals from me?"—"No, no, Chancellor," replied the King, "go sleep in peace." And indeed, they say, he is almost always asleep: there are many wise conjectures on the subject, and people cannot understand the reason of this augmentation of favours.

The Prince set out the day before yesterday, and M. de Turenne is to follow to-day. Write to Brancas, to congratulate him on his daughter's being in the Queen's household, for he is very proud of it. La Troche returns you many thanks for your kind remembrance of her. Her son has still nose enough to lose half of it at the next siege, without the loss being very apparent. It is said that the *Dew* [1] begins to be less friendly with the *Torrent,* and that after the siege of Maëstricht, they entered into a league of mutual confidence, and saw the *Fire* and the *Snow* every day of their lives: you know all this could not last long, without occasioning great tumult, nor without being discovered. The *Hail* [2] seems to me, with respect to the reconciliation between you and him, like a man who goes to confession, and keeps one great sin upon his conscience: by what other name can you call the trick he has played you? Still the wise heads say, you must speak, you must ask, you have time, and that is sufficient: but do not you wonder at the faggoting of my letters? I leave one subject, you think I have done with it, and suddenly I resume it again, *versi sciolti.* Do you know that the Marquis de Sessac is here, that he will have a position in the army, and will probably soon be presented to the King? This is manifestly predestination.

Corbinelli and I talk of Providence everyday, and we say, as you know, from day to day, and hour to hour, that your journey is determined. You are very glad that

[1] The *Dew,* the *Torrent,* the *Fire,* and the *Snow,* etc., are ciphers between the mother and daughter. These ciphers do not always mean the same persons. In this place, it seems that Madame de Montespan is the *Torrent,* Madame de La Vallière the *Dew,* the King is the *Fire,* and the *Snow* stands for the Queen.

[2] Apparently the Bishop of Marseilles.

you have not to answer for this affair; for a resolution is a wonderful thing for you, quite a wild beast. I have seen you a long time deciding on a colour: it is a proof of a too enlightened mind, which, seeing at one glance all the difficulties, remains suspended, as it were, like Mahomet's tomb: such was M. Bignon, the greatest wit of the age; I, who am the least of the present age, hate uncertainty, and love decision. M. de Pomponne informs me you received your leave of absence to-day: I am consequently ready to do everything you wish, and to follow, or not to follow, the advice of your friends.

It is said here, that M. de Turenne has not yet begun his march, and that there is no further occasion for it, because M. de Monterei has at last retreated, and M. de Luxembourg is freed, with the assistance of five or six thousand men, whom M. de Schomberg assembled, and with whom he so extremely harassed M. de Monterei, that he was obliged to retire with his troops. The Prince is to be recalled, and all our poor friends with him: this is the news of the day.

The ball was dull, and ended at half past eleven. The King led out the Queen: the Dauphin, Madame; Monsieur, Mademoiselle; the Prince de Conti, the great Mademoiselle; the Comte de Roche-sur-Yon, Mademoiselle de Blois, handsome as an angel, dressed in black velvet, with a profusion of diamonds, and an apron and stomacher of point lace. The Princesse d'Harcourt was as pale [1] as the Commandeur in the Comedy *Festin de Pierre*. M. de Pomponne has desired me to dine with him to-morrow to meet Despréaux, who is to read his *Art of Poetry*.

[1] She was without a touch of rouge.

LETTER 282

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, January 15, 1674.

Saturday last I dined with M. de Pomponne as I told you, and was there till five o'clock, enchanted, transported, enraptured, with the beauties of Despréaux's *Art of Poetry*; d'Hacqueville was there, we often talked of the pleasure you would have received from it. M. de Pomponne recollected that one day when you were a very little girl at your uncle de Sévigné's, you got behind a large window with your brother, and said you were a prisoner, a poor unfortunate Princess driven from your father's house; your brother, who was as handsome as yourself, and you were as handsome as an angel, played his part extremely well: you were nine years of age. He made me remember the day perfectly; he never forgets one moment that he has seen you, and promises himself great pleasure on seeing you again, which is very gratifying to me. I own to you, my dear, that my heart is bursting with joy, but I shall conceal it till I know your resolution.

M. de Villars has returned home from Spain, and has given us a thousand amusing anecdotes respecting the Spaniards. I have at length seen La Marans in her cell, for it is nothing else. I found her quite in dishabille, not a single hair upon her head, with a coarse coif of old Venetian point, a black handkerchief on her neck, a faded grey gown, and an old petticoat. She seemed very glad to see me, we embraced each other tenderly. She does not seem at all changed; we began the conversation by talking of you; she appears to love you as well as she ever did, and seemed so humble that it was impossible to help loving her. We then talked of the religious life she had lately embraced. She assured me it was true that God had vouchsafed her a great portion of grace, of which she

had the most grateful sense: that this grace consists in great faith, profound love of God, horror for the world and its vanities, and a thorough distrust of herself; adding, that if she were to go abroad for only an hour, this divine spirit would evaporate. In short, she seems to preserve it carefully in her solitude like a bottle of fine perfume: she believes the world would make her lose this precious liquor, and she even fears the parade of devotion might spill it. Madame de Schomberg says she is not to be compared to Madame de Marans. Her savage disposition is softened into a passion for retirement: the constitution does not change: she is even exempt from the folly common to most women, to love their confessor: she does not approve this tie, and never speaks to him but at confession. She goes on foot to her Parish Church; reads all our books of religion; works, prays; has a fixed time for everything; takes all her meals in her own room; sees Madame de Schomberg at a certain hour; hates news, as much as she used to like it; is as charitable to others, as she used to slander them; and loves the Creator, as much as she loved the creature. We laughed a good deal at her former manners, and turned them into ridicule: she has not the least air of the Colette sisters: she speaks very sincerely and very agreeably of her present position; I was two hours with her, without being at all dull: she reproached herself even for this pleasure, but without the least affectation; in short, she is much more amiable than she ever was. I do not think, my dear child, you can complain that I have not been particular enough.

I have just received your letter of the seventh. I own to you, my dearest, that the joy it has given me is so lively that my heart can scarcely contain it: you know how strongly it feels, and I should hate myself, if I were so warmly interested in my own affairs as in yours. At last, my child, you are coming; this is the most delightful to me of all: but I am going to tell you something you do not expect, which is, that I solemnly swear to you, that if M. de La Garde had not deemed your journey expedient,

and that if it really were not so for your own affairs, I would not have taken into consideration, at least for this year, the ardent desire I have to see you, nor what you owe to my infinite affection: I know how to keep within the bounds of reason, whatever it cost me, and I have sometimes as much strength in my weakness, as those who are wiser. After this sincere confession I cannot conceal from you that I am penetrated with joy, and that, reason concurring with my wishes, I am, at the moment I write to you, perfectly satisfied, so that I think of nothing now but of receiving you. Do you know, the best thing after yourself and M. de Grignan would be to bring the Coadjutor? you will not perhaps always have La Garde; and if he fails you, you well know M. de Grignan is not so zealous in his own affairs as in those of the King, his master: he has a religious care of those, which can only be compared to his negligence with regard to his own. When he will take the trouble to speak, no one does it better, and we cannot therefore but wish it. You are not like Madame de Calvisson, to act alone; you must wait eight or ten years; but M. de Grignan, you, and the Coadjutor, would do admirably together. Cardinal de Retz has just arrived, and will be delighted to see you. What joy, my dear child, will your return occasion! but above all things, come prudently. It is to M. de Grignan I give this charge, and I expect him to be accountable to me. I have written to the Coadjutor, to entreat him to accompany you: he will facilitate our audience with the two Ministers, and will support his brother's interest. The Coadjutor is bold and fortunate, and you will mutually heighten each other's consequence: I could talk till this time to-morrow upon the subject. I have written to the Archbishop. Gain my point with the Coadjutor, and give him my letter.

The Prince has come back, after having been thirty leagues on his journey. M. de Turenne did not go. M. de Monterei has withdrawn his forces, and M. de Luxembourg is now at liberty. Within these twenty-four hours the chapel at St.-Germain has been robbed of a silver lamp,

worth seven thousand francs, and six candlesticks of the same metal, each of them taller than I am. This is a daring insolence [1]. The ropes they made use of, to get in, were found by the Richelieu gallery. No one can conceive how the robbery could have been committed, for there are guards continually going that way, and patrolling about all night.

Do you know that peace is talked of? M. de Chaulnes has since come from Brittany, and is to set out again immediately for Cologne.

LETTER 283

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Monsieur* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, January 15, 1674.

I acknowledge, my dear Comte, your natural politeness, and the goodness of your heart, which makes you sensible of all the tenderness of mine; I feel with pleasure the kindness of your letter; and believe me, it is not merely by way of return, that I protest to you I would willingly have made the consideration of my own happiness yield to the solidity of my daughter's arguments, had not the interest of your own affairs declared on the side of my inclination. You know M. de La Garde, and consequently can judge how unlikely he would be to put you both to inconvenience merely to indulge my wishes, had he not been more than ever convinced of the necessity of your taking this journey; you alone are the proper person to speak to the King on your own affairs. Madame

[1] The Duc de Saint-Simon relates a still more extraordinary robbery that took place at Versailles. In one night all the gold ornaments and fringes were stolen from the State apartment, from the gallery to the chapel. Whatever inquiries were made, no trace could be found of the robber. But five or six days after, the King being at supper, an enormous packet fell suddenly upon the table at some distance from him: it contained the stolen fringes, with a note fastened to it with these words, "Good times, take thy fringes again, the pleasure pays not half the pain." Saint-Simon was a witness of this.

de Grignan will find a way likewise to employ her abilities to the purpose, and if you can bring the Coadjutor with you, your troop will then be complete; this is not my opinion only, but that of your friends in general. M. de Pomponne is of the number, and will be greatly rejoiced to see you all three. I have only to add, that I leave the management of the journey wholly to you: only let me give you a little hint, not to travel in your carriage along the banks of the Rhône, and to avoid a certain water about a league from Montélimart: this water is no other than the Rhône itself, which they obliged my carriage to pass through last year, and you cannot imagine how prettily my horses swam: for God's sake do not laugh at my precautions; prudence and foresight are the only means to make a journey safe.

Adieu, my dear Comte; I may hope then to have the inexpressible joy of embracing you soon; what do I not owe you for this favour? If I have a sincere friendship and the warmest affection for you, you know it is not the feeling of to-day.

LETTER 284

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, January 19, 1674.

I should be extremely sorry, my child, if any of our couriers were to be drowned; they all bring you letters with leave of absence, which it is absolutely necessary you should receive. It is admirable in you to remember what I said about that same Durance: for my part, I never forget the least circumstance that relates to you: judge then if I remember Nove, or our Spaniard, or our Carthusians, or our Grignan Songs, or a thousand and one other things.

You say you wish I could see the state of your heart with regard to me: I am persuaded that I should be per-

fectly satisfied; and, not to spin out this subject to an immeasurable length, I shall only tell you, that I know you love me dearly; but it is cruel of you to receive with so much grief the mere trifles I now and then give my little *pigeons* [1], when you know that one of the play-things which the Coadjutor has made them a present of, is worth all mine put together; so not a word more upon that subject, if you please, while I remain guardian, though it is very true that I am going to resign my office; but I am really afraid of your chicanery. M. de Grignan and you will find fault with everything, and I know you are thinking of nothing at present but quarrelling with me; I am very well acquainted with you both: the *worthy* absolutely trembles at the thoughts of it, and though he fully expects to be ill-used, is dying to see you here. I love that good creature from the very bottom of my soul, for all depends on him.

M. de La Garde is more confident than ever that you will do wonders by your presence, and is very desirous that the Coadjutor should be of the party; it would be worthy of his friendship, and would complete what he began so well at Lambesc: he has good friends, and is thought highly of; he can talk to Ministers, is intrepid and fortunate; but I entered fully into all this the other day. We have made the speech among us, in which M. de Grignan is to address the King; it is in a style calculated to please His Majesty, that is, mild and respectful; yours is to be a little more animated: in short, we took your different tones, and upon rehearsal found that it was just the thing.

You know the Prince has returned, and that all is at an end. I expect your brother every instant. I informed you of the robbery at St.-Germain's chapel; it is asserted that the King knows the thief, and has put a stop to the search: that it was a man of quality, but not one

[1] Madame de Sévigné means her grand-children here; and by her guardianship, the care of Madame de Grignan's daughter who was left with her.

belonging to the Palace. The Princesse d'Harcourt dances at the ball, and will not miss even a country-dance; so you may judge of her devotion, which was only put on to get appointed Lady of the Palace. A few days ago she said, "I am a heathen, compared with my sister d'Aumont;" but now she says, "My sister d'Aumont is continually dull and melancholy; she takes delight in nothing but burying the dead." She does not yet use rouge, but very submissively declares, that she is ready to do it whenever the Queen or the Prince d'Harcourt orders her to do it. But neither the Queen nor the Prince has been pleased to do it yet, and so, poor lady, she is forced to pinch her cheeks to give them a bloom: it is believed too, that M. de Sainte Beuve will enter into that expedient. I would not mention these follies to any one but you; for, after all, the daughter of Brancas is sacred to me, and I beg you will not mention it again.

The balls are crowded with children; Madame de Montespan is neglected there, but takes the highest place: she says Mademoiselle de Rouvroi is already too old to dance at the ball; MADEMOISELLE, Mademoiselle de Blois, the little de Piennes, Mademoiselle de Roquelaure (rather too old, she is fifteen). Mademoiselle de Blois is a prodigy; the King and every one are delighted with her: she came to Madame de Richelieu in the midst of the dancing, and said, "Madame, can you tell me whether the King is pleased with me or not?" She passed on to Madame de Montespan, "Madame," said she, "you take no notice of your friends to-day:" in short, with certain little things that come from her lovely mouth, she charms by her wit, so that everyone thinks it impossible to surpass her. I beg pardon of my great Mademoiselle: God be praised, she dances no longer. The other children are not yet to be seen: Madame Scarron very little. I have had a charming conversation with the *Mist* [1]; she has risen

[1] The *Mist*, the *Thaw*, the *Leaf*, the *Storm*, are ciphers. It has been seen above, that the *Thaw* was Madame Scarron. The *Mist* is probably Madame de La Fayette, and the *Leaf* Madame de Coulanges,

as high as the *Thaw,* and perhaps higher; nothing can be of greater importance to you than the road by the *Mist,* who is true to you; and from her great zeal and affection for you, she will be one of your instruments. The *Leaf* is the most frivolous and lightest merchandise you ever saw; he who governs the trunk of her tree, is going to replant it, that it may grow green again; but he wishes to be rid of the expense, and will not sow in unfruitful soil; the *Storm,* I think it is his real name, is more friendly towards you than you can imagine.

The Abbé de Valbelle has just left us[1]. He told me, that yesterday at mass, His Majesty, in a good-humoured way, gave his almoner a printed paper, by an unknown author, which has been handed about at St.-Germain, in which the noblesse humbly request His Majesty to correct the indecency of his clergy, who get together and chat and talk loud, and turn their backs to the altar, before His Majesty comes into the Chapel; and that he would be pleased to order them to behave with at least as much decency when God only is present, as after His Majesty comes in. This address is extremely well drawn up: the priests are dreadfully enraged at it, especially those who used to take the opportunity of the King's absence to talk and abuse the musicians, to the great scandal of their cloth, and the Church they belong to. He told me besides, that the Archbishop of Rheims would denounce eternal enmity against the Coadjutor, if he did not accompany you to Paris. What has been lately decided in Languedoc ought certainly to weigh with you above all considerations: this is a favourable time for you, and M. de Pomponne will always be on the side of justice, which is all you require in regard to your town-house.

The story of R**** is very diverting: the good Bishop fretted, fumed, raged, and swore, and, after all,

both friends of Madame Scarron. The *Storm* is apparently the Abbé Têtu.

[1] Louis-Alphonse de Valbelle, almoner in ordinary to the King, afterwards made Bishop of Alet, and from thence translated to the see of St. Omer.

was obliged to make the first step towards you; and you were quite right to forgive what had passed.

R****, de tes conseils voilà le juste fruit [1].

Was not he the honest man who advised him [2]?

Corbinelli writes you an account of the triumph of the King's Lieutenants: the judgment given in this case is the most exact rule for your affair; nothing in the world could happen at a more favourable juncture; but be sure you bring copies of what is entered in your registers, for they will be of service to you; mere words signify little, when we are called upon for proofs. Everyone here admires your honesty in saying that with such base and low-minded people as those with whom you have to deal, nothing is gained by generosity.

I am yours most affectionately, my dear, and I embrace as many of the Grignans as happen to be round you.

LETTER 285

From M. DE CORBINELLI *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, January 19, 1674.

The judgment given in favour of the King's Commissioner in Languedoc against the Bishops of that Province, is an admirable precedent in your favour. Another victory, another triumph, another honour for us, and new vexation to our enemies; everything will now go smoothly: and if we should chance at any time to lose a point in Provence, we shall recover it here: only come to us, and we will form such deep schemes of politics, as shall make our foes tremble. I do not know whether the Marquise, your mother, has given you a proper description of the ball at St.-Germain, but this I know, that you will enliven

[1] R****, such are the just fruits of thy advice. [Translation.]

[2] A person who was Registrar to the States of Provence.

everything by your presence. I cannot sufficiently admire the affair of R****. If you had remembered my lessons, respecting country liberality, you would have promised him your protection, and then have gloriously gone from your word under some noble pretext: you quite forget all those fine maxims, and yet they are the safest in the world to follow. The King will certainly reproach you one day or other for this behaviour of yours; you absolutely sacrifice a whole Province to your false notions of generosity: you might have said that you could not grant the favour with any safety to your conscience; but having granted it, could you not have found in all the mysteries of politics, one handsome device, to turn out this Registrar? Oh, generous souls, unworthy to reign over those of Provence!

LETTER 286

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, January 22, 1674.

I do not know, my dear child, whether the hope of seeing you soon, which expands my heart, gives me a peculiar propensity to joy and merriment, but I laughed most immoderately at what you wrote me about Pellisson[1], and M. de Grignan. Corbinelli is enchanted with it, and whoever sees the passage will be fortunate. It is impossible to keep a thing up with greater humour, nor to resume it with greater skill, than you do in different parts of your letter. Believe me it is impossible to write more delightfully: the spirit of our correspondence can scarcely, I think, be equalled, and is a great comfort to me. You say too much of my letters; they are not to be compared with yours, and yet, see what an odd creature I am, I protest to you I earnestly wish to receive no more

[1] She alludes to the ugliness of Pellisson, who in this respect resembled M. de Grignan.

of them; and in saying this, let me tell you, I set no small value on your presence.

Your observation on the subject of the *Hail*, who speaks according to his wishes and views, without paying any attention either to truth or probability, is a very good one. I think for my own part there is nothing like being insolent: is it not extremely proper? I have always detested this style myself, but if it succeed, I must change my opinion. I shall insert the affair of your friend the assassinator, in my book on Ingratitude; I think it is a very curious incident: but what strikes me most, is the extreme delicacy of the gentleman, who, because he will not suffer anyone to be in love with his mother, stabs his friend and benefactor. Your Provençals have strange consciences: that of the *Hail* (the Bishop of Marseilles) is a miniature on the same plan; his scruples, his remissness, his proposals, his oppositions, augment and blacken the dose: he is an excellent counterpart of your villain.

But to change the subject. You are really coming then, my child! I shall have the joy of receiving you here once more, of embracing you, and giving you a thousand little marks of my affection. This hope spreads a mild influence of joy over my heart: I am sure you believe it, and are under no apprehension, lest I should send you back again.—I have been to-day to St.-Germain; the ladies there talked much of your return. The Comtesse de Guiche desired me to tell you, that she will not write to you, since you will come and fetch your answer: she dined there, though in weeds; the Queen wished it. I witnessed the ceremony. The King and Queen ate in gloomy state. Madame de Richelieu[1] sits, and the other ladies sit, or stand, according to their rank: those who have not dined, are ready to rush upon the dishes, and those who have dined are sick with the smell, and suffocated with the steam of the meats: so that the whole party suffers. Madame de Crussol's head was dressed in the extremity of the fashion: she will on Wednesday appear in rubies, hav-

[1] Lady of Honour to the Queen.

ing taken all those of the Duc and Madame de Meckelbourg. I supped last evening at Gourville's with this Princesse; Madame de La Fayette, and M. de La Rochefoucauld were there: we exhausted the subject of Germany, without excepting a single principality. Adieu, my dear child, I leave you, to chat with d'Hacqueville and Corbinelli: they make no ceremony of interrupting me now you are coming.

The King has given the position of Colonel-General of the Swiss Guards, which M. de Soissons [1] held, to the Comte du Vexin [2]. M. de Louvois will act for him.

LETTER 287

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, January 26, 1674.

D'Hacqueville and La Garde still continue to wish for your arrival, as the thing in the world that will be of the greatest advantage to your affairs; come then, my dearest child, and by your presence change the face of everything here; *se me miras, me miran* [3], this is most admirably applied: you must not set your sun-dial in the shade: your Controller will not leave Provence so soon as was imagined. He wrote to Madame d'Herbigny, that you did him wrong, in thinking that justice alone engaged him in your interests, since your own beauty and merit had a great share in it.

There was not a creature at the ball last Wednesday. The King and Queen had all the crown jewels on; but as ill fortune would have it, neither MONSIEUR nor MA-

[1] Eugène-Maurice de Savoie, Comte de Soissons, died June the 7th, 1673.

[2] Louis-César de Bourbon, son of Madame de Montespan, born in 1672.

[3] An inscription for a sun-dial. "If you look on me, others will look on me," but *mirar* signifies to *admire* as well as to look upon.

DAME, nor MADEMOISELLE, nor Mesdames de Soubise, Sully, d'Harcourt, Ventadour, Coëtquen, nor Grancey, could be present, on different accounts, which was a great pity. Their Majesties seemed to be a good deal vexed about it.

I returned yesterday from Mêni, where I went the day before to pay a visit to M. d'Andilly. I was near six hours with him, and enjoyed all the gratifications that could be tasted in the conversation of so witty and excellent a man: I likewise saw my uncle de Sévigné [1], but for a very short time. That Port-Royal is a perfect Thebais [2], a very paradise; a desert, where all that is left of true Christian devotion, is retired. The whole country for a league round, breathes the air of virtue and holiness. There are four or five hermits, whom no one knows, who live like the penitents of St.-Jean Climachus [3]. The nuns are angels upon earth. Mademoiselle de Vertus is wearing out the remains of a miserable life there, in the most excruciating pain, but with inconceivable resignation. The very meanest of the inhabitants have a virtuous serenity in their countenances, and a modesty of deportment, to be met with in no other place. I own to you I was delighted to see this divine solitude of which I have heard so much; it is a frightful valley, calculated to inspire a taste for religion. I returned to Mêni to sleep, and yesterday returned here after having embraced M. d'Andilly as I passed. I shall dine to-morrow with M. de Pomponne: he will talk of his father, and I of my daughter: these are the subjects we have most at heart. I am every day in expectation of your brother: he writes to me in the most affectionate manner. He set out sooner, and stays longer than the rest; we have a notion that this is occasioned by an attachment he has formed at Sézanne; but as it is not of a serious nature, I am not uneasy about it.

[1] M. d'Andilly and M. de Sévigné had for many years lived a life of retirement at Port-Royal des Champs.

[2] A part of Egypt, bordering upon Ethiopia; the people of which were remarkable for the nature and simplicity of their manners.

[3] Remarkable for the austerity of their devotion.

It is a fact that M. de Villars and his people were attacked on their return from Spain by the people of the Spanish ambassador, who was on his return to France. The dispute was ridiculous enough, the masters exposed themselves, and it went to such a point, that they drew upon each other: some of the servants lost their lives in the affray.

Madame de Villars has received no congratulations on her husband's return, but she has got him, and that is all she wants. M. de Luxembourg is here; there is great talk of a peace, that is to say, we speak as we wish, rather than judge from the actual existing state of affairs[1]: but there is no harm, however, in wishing, be things how they may.

I hope, my dear child, you will be more at ease and more determined, when you have received your leave of absence. There is no doubt, but that your return will prove to your advantage; if you were not well here, you would feel the effects of it in Provence; *se me miras, me miran.* Nothing can be more applicable, I abide by that. Monsieur and Madame de Coulanges, la Sanzei, and *the worthy,* all wish for you with impatience, and are all equally desirous with myself, that you should bring the Coadjutor along with you. I have had many conferences with La Garde. You cannot set too high a value on his advice. He was mentioning your affairs to Gordes the other day, who is perfectly master of them, and gives an admirable turn to what is necessary to be said to the King. You cannot consult anyone who is better acquainted with this part of the world than himself.

Every one seems delighted with Mademoiselle de Blois and the Prince de Conti. D'Hacqueville will send you news of what is going on in Europe, and how great a figure England makes at present in the political world.

[1] What can be said of a war begun with so much ardour, so much preparation, so many means, and of which in less than two years they were so weary and so disgusted? Yet this war terminated with the glorious treaty of Nimeguen, whose advantages served, unfortunately, the ambition and pride of Louis XIV.

The Swiss Guards are at last given to the Duc du Maine[1], and not to M. de Vexin, as I told you in mine of the twenty-second, but in the place of it, he has the Abbey of St.-Germain des Prés.

LETTER 288

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, January 29, 1674.

I really think, my dear child, you ought to make more sure of your leave of absence than you seem to do. M. de Pomponne's note, which I sent you, is a sufficient confirmation of it. A man like him, would not have undertaken to ask for anything that he was not sure of obtaining. You must have received it the day after you wrote to me, and ought to have been ready to set out immediately; you speak of several days, and that displeases me. You will have received many letters by the same post, and have taken advice from the fountain of good council, I mean the Archbishop, concerning the manner in which you are to conduct your affairs. You will see that La Garde advises you to bring but few attendants with you; if you were to bring all those with you who wish to come, your journey to Paris would look like a voyage to Madagascar; you must act within bounds, and keep up the due decorum of the Province.

I suppose M. de Grignan has gone to Marseilles and Toulon: it is now a year, this very month, since we were there together: and I imagine you think of me as you pass through Salon and the other places where you have seen me. One of my greatest misfortunes is, that the sight of places affects me beyond expression, by awakening the most painful recollections. I endeavour to hide from

[1] Louis-Auguste de Bourbon, the King's son by Madame de Montespan, born the 31st of March, 1670.

you and all the world, half the tenderness with which my heart overflows.

The new opera is very much frequented, but the other is considered the most pleasing. Baptiste thought he had surpassed it, but the wisest is sometimes mistaken. The lovers of music always find new charms in it: I believe I shall wait till you come, that we may see it together. The balls of St.-Germain were sadly dull: the children want to go to bed at ten o'clock, and the King pays no attention to anything but the carnival. He said at dinner, "When I give no entertainments, people complain, and when I do, they will not attend." He only danced the last time with Madame de Crussol. M. de Crussol [1], who is a great wit, said, looking at his wife, who was painted redder than the rubies that ornamented her: "She is not handsome, gentlemen, but she has a fine face."

Your return is now the subject of conversation at Court; you cannot imagine the compliments that are paid me upon the occasion. It is five years ago to-day, my dear child, that you were married.

LETTER 289

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, February 2, 1674.

You speak of letters of the fifteenth, but do not mention those of the twelfth, which you expected with such impatience, and which brought your leave of absence; but as you take no notice of them, I take it for granted that you have received them.

You do not seem sufficiently to hasten your departure. Everyone torments me to know whether you are upon the road, and when you will arrive; to all which I can give no satisfactory answer. I think you are still at Grignan, and will set out to-morrow or Monday. In

[1] He became the Duc d'Usèz.

short, my dear child, I think of nothing but you, and follow you every step you take. I thank you for the kind promise you have made me, of not exposing yourself in your carriage on the banks of the Rhône: but you say you intend to ford the Loire; you will know better than I can tell you, how to proceed when you get to Lyons: come safe, and in good health, and I desire nothing more. My heart is beyond expression delighted at the joyful prospect of seeing you soon. Let those go out to meet you who choose it; I shall wait for you in your own room, and shall be delighted to receive you: you will find a fire, candles, good elbow-chairs, and a heart which is not to be surpassed in affection. I shall embrace the Comte and the Coadjutor, and bid them both heartily welcome.

The Archbishop of Rheims has been to see me, and calls out for the Coadjutor with might and main. Let me assure you, that you are greatly obliged to M. de Pomponne, for his good opinion of you, and the great desire he expresses to see you. Your poor brother has just arrived; Cardinal de Retz has this moment sent to inform me of it; make haste then, and come both together in a moment.

My dear child, I am all your own; I do not say so merely by way of concluding my letter, but as the most solemn truth in the world. Mademoiselle de Méri does not write to you; we begin to drop that sort of intercourse now, in the hope of a better. My son embraces you most affectionately, as I do all the dear Grignans.

LETTER 290

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, February 5, 1674.

It is many years ago[1] to-day, that there came into the world a creature destined to love you beyond every other

[1] She refers to her own birthday, the 5th of February, 1626.

thing in existence. I beg you not to suffer your imagination to wander either to the right hand or to the left, *cet homme-là, sire, c'étoit moi-même*[1].

It was yesterday three years that I felt the most poignant grief of my whole life. You set out at that time for Provence, and you remain there still. My letter would be very long, if I attempted to express all the sorrow I then felt, and what I have since felt, in consequence of this separation. But to leave this melancholy digression. I have received no letters from you to-day: I know not whether I am to expect any, and I fear not, as it is so late: I have, however, expected them with impatience; I wanted to hear of your departure from Aix, and to be able to compute, with some exactness, the time of your return. Everyone teases me, and I know not what to answer. I think but of you and your journey. If I receive any letters from you after this is sent away, you may make yourself perfectly easy; for I will certainly take care to do whatever you desire me.

I write to-day a little earlier than usual. M. de Corbinelli, and Mademoiselle de Méri, are here, and have dined with me. I am going to a little opera of Molière's, that is to be sung at Pélissari's. It is an excellent composition; the Prince, the Duc, and the Duchesse, will be there. I shall, perhaps, sup at Gourville's with Madame de La Fayette, the Duc, Madame de Thianges, and M. de Vivonne, of whom we are to take our leave, as he sets out from hence to-morrow. If this party is broken up, I shall, perhaps, go to Madame de Chaulnes, where I am earnestly invited, as well by the mistress of the house, as by Cardinals de Retz and Bouillon, who made me promise them. The first of these is very impatient to see you; he loves you dearly.

It was thought, that Mademoiselle de Blois had the small-pox, but it does not prove so. There is not a word said of the news from England; this makes me conclude

[1] A line of Marot in an epistle to Francis I. *This man, Sire, was myself.*

there is nothing good from thence. There has been only a ball or two at Paris during the whole carnival; there were masques at noon, but not many. It is a very dull season. The Assemblies at St.-Germain are mortifications for the King, and only show the falling off of the carnival.

Father Bourdaloue preached a sermon on the purification of Our Lady, which transported everybody. There was such energy in his discourse as made the courtiers tremble. Never did preacher before enforce with so much authority, and in so noble a manner, the great truths of the Gospel. His design was to show that every power ought to be subject to the law, from the example of Our Lord, who was presented at the Temple. This was insisted on with all the strength and clearness imaginable; and certain points were urged with a force worthy of the apostle St. Paul himself.

The Archbishop of Rheims, as he returned yesterday from St.-Germain, met with a curious adventure. He drove at his usual rate like a whirlwind. If he thinks himself a great man, his servants think him still greater. They passed through Nanterre, when they met a man on horseback, and in an insolent tone bid him clear the way. The poor man used his utmost endeavours to avoid the danger that threatened him, but his horse proved unmanageable. To make short of it, the coach and six turned them both topsy-turvy; but at the same time the coach too was completely overturned. In an instant the horse and the man, instead of amusing themselves with having their limbs broken, rose almost miraculously; the man remounted, and galloped away, and is galloping still for aught I know; while the servants, the Archbishop's coachman, and the Archbishop himself at the head of them, cried out, "Stop that villain, stop him, thrash him soundly." The rage of the Archbishop was so great, that afterwards, in relating the adventure, he said, "if he could have caught the rascal, he would have broken all his bones, and cut off both his ears."

Adieu, my dear, delightful child, I cannot express my eagerness to see you. I shall direct this letter to Lyons; it is the third; the two first were to be left with the *chamarier*. You must be got thither by this time or never.

[*Monsieur and Madame de Grignan arrived in Paris a few days after the date of the foregoing letter. M. de Grignan returned to Provence in the month of May,* 1674, *but Madame de Grignan did not rejoin him there until the end of May,* 1675.]

*LETTER 291

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, September 5, 1674.

Your physician, who says my disorder is the vapours, and you, who prescribe a remedy for them, are not the first who have advised me to use specifics [1]; but the reason which has prevented my taking any precaution against these vapours, will prevent me also from curing them. Your disinterestedness in giving me this advice, for which you wish me to praise you, is not so commendable as it would have been in the prime of our youth, when, perhaps, there would have been some merit in it. Be this as it may, I am in good health at present: if I die of this disease, it will be by no common sword; and I will appoint you to write my epitaph. What say you to our victories? I never hear of war without thinking of you. Your vacant situation struck a damp to my heart. You know by whom it is filled. Was not the Marquis de Renel one of your friends and relations? When I see you at home in such times as these, I admire the King's good fortune in being

[1] Bussy wrote to her thus: "The remedy being in your hands, I cannot suppose you hate life sufficiently not to make use of it, nor that you can have greater repugnance to take a lover than an emetic."

able to dispense with the services of so many brave men, whom he leaves without employment.

My son has been slightly wounded in the head; it is a miracle that he is saved, as well as the four squadrons of the *Maison du Roi,* who were posted for eight successive hours within reach of the enemies' fire, without any other movement than pressing forward in proportion to the number of the slain. I have heard it is a dreadful state of suffering to be thus exposed. Your letters to the King always delight me.

Madame DE GRIGNAN *also writes to the Comte* DE BUSSY.
(*Enclosed in her Mother's Letter.*)

I thank you for having thought of, and pitied me during my mother's indisposition. I am pleased that you know how much my heart is interested in everything that concerns her: this seems to be my greatest excellence, and I am very glad that you, whose esteem I value, are not ignorant of it. If I had any other essential good quality, I would draw my portrait[1] for you: but be content with this, and with my esteem for your merit, which is inseparable from indignation against Fortune for the injustice she has done you.

*LETTER 292

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, October 15, 1674.

It seems to me that I do not write well; and if it were necessary for me to have a good opinion of my own letters, I should desire you to give me confidence by your approbation.

[1] Not only were portraits of this kind very much in fashion, but it was even customary for persons to draw their own. Many of these portraits are to be found in the last volume of the *Memoirs of Montpensier,* the greater part fulsome and insipid.

Your son, and the little Chanoinesse de Rabutin his sister, whom I very much love, have dined with me. Their name excites an interest in my heart, and their youthful merit delights me. I could wish the dear boy to have a good education: it is presuming too much to leave everything to a good natural understanding. There were two Rabutins in the regiment of Anjou, commanded by Saint-Géran; he has mentioned them to me in very strong terms of praise: one of them was killed in the last battle M. de Turenne gained near Strasbourg; the other was wounded. These brothers were distinguished by their valour. I think it odd that this virtue should be inherited only by the males of our family, and that the females should have taken all the timidity. Never was anything better divided, nor more distinctly separated; for you have not left us a particle of boldness. In some families the virtues and the vices are a little blended. But let us return to the battle.

M. de Turenne has again beaten the enemy, taken eight pieces of cannon, a great quantity of arms and baggage, and remained master of the field. These continual victories give great pleasure to the King. I thought your letter to him a very good one, and wished its effect might be equally so. Fortune has never displeased me so highly as in abandoning you. She has been guilty of still greater injustice towards M. de Rohan [1]. His affair goes on badly. It is by witnessing greater misfortunes, that we learn to bear our own with patience.

Send me word how you proceed with the history of our Rabutins. Cardinal de Retz is here. His head is full of genealogies. I should be delighted with his being acquainted with ours, in the charms you have given it. It would have been a great amusement to him at Commerci, but he does not now talk of going there. I rather think you will find him here; it is our interest that he should pass the winter with us, his society being more desirable than that of almost any other person.

[1] The Chevalier de Rohan had entered into a conspiracy to deliver Quillebeuf to the enemy. He was beheaded in the following month.

My daughter is very much pleased with what you have written to her; nothing can be more gallant. She promises to write to you at the first opportunity, with good ink[1]. My son sends you a thousand thanks for your remembrance. It is true, that to be in the situation, in which the Gendarmes were placed at the battle of Senef, was precisely to be shot. What a happiness that he is safe! Adieu, my dear cousin.

*LETTER 293

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, January 24, 1675.

I think of you very often, my cousin, and I never see the Marquise d'Humières, that we do not, at least, heave a sigh on your account. Like me, she is full of good will towards you, but all our wishes do not advance the decrees of Providence a single step; for I believe in Providence; it is my philosophy. You on your side, and I on mine, with different opinions, are both travelling on the same road; we both aim at tranquillity, you by your reasoning, and I by submission. The strength of your mind, and the docility of mine, lead us equally to despise everything that passes here below. It is in reality of little moment. We have scarcely anything to do with our destiny; all is in the hands of Providence. With such thoughts as these, judge whether I cannot comprehend your tranquillity.

What say you to our success, and the glorious action of M. de Turenne, in making the enemy repass the Rhine? This termination of the campaign gives us some rest, and disposes the Court to pleasure and amusement. There is

[1] M. de Bussy had complained that he had not been able to read Madame de Grignan's postscript, because it was written with such pale ink. "It is only fit," said he, "to write promises that are not intended to be kept."

a new opera, which is very fine. I leave the pen to Madame de Grignan; I say the pen, for you know she has some extraordinary ink that is exclusively her own.

Madame DE GRIGNAN *also writes to the Comte* DE BUSSY.
(*Enclosed in her Mother's Letter.*)

I have not been able to find any black paper, and therefore have determined to make use of the blackest ink in Paris. It is only a miser's feast: see how my mother's is effaced by mine. I have nothing now to fear but blots, which are almost unavoidable with ink of this thickness: but I must oblige you in your own way. Indeed, Sir, you would do much better to spare both our ink and our paper, and come and see us, since you do me the favour to assure me, that my stay in Paris is not indifferent to you. Come then, and take advantage of a good which the first swallow will deprive you of. If I were not writing to you in my mother's letter, I should tell you, that even this will be neglecting too long the duties which call me to Provence; but she would take it amiss, if I were not to include her in the number of those who ought to regulate my conduct. She is now mistress of it, and I have the mortification of experiencing her authority only in things wherein my complaisance and obedience will be suspected of being confederates with her. I know not why I enter into this long harangue. It seems to me as if apologies were not necessary with you: it must therefore be solely for the pleasure of talking to one who listens with more attention, and replies with more propriety, than any person I have the honour of being acquainted with.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *continues and concludes her Letter to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Ah! this indeed may be called good ink. Would to God you were here! we would talk of a thousand things, but especially of the sentiments which the Provençale men-

tions to you, and which, true as they are, must be concealed from the generality of the world, because they are not very probable. Corbinelli is here; he thinks you have forgotten him, but he loves and honours you extremely. The remembrance of you constitutes the charm of our conversations, and then makes us regret our loss.

*LETTER 294

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

January 30, 1675.

I should be very fastidious, Madame, if I were not satisfied with your ink, and even with your heart. It is true that your mother's ink turns pale by the side of yours, and you now completely efface it. You have even steered clear of blots: but from what rocks have you not also escaped! Beauty, wit, youth, and opportunity, have not made the smallest blot in your conduct. I have only to add, Madame, that if I were at liberty to visit Paris, I would gladly do so; but, I assure you, I should sometimes leave it, for the pleasure of receiving your letters.

*LETTER 295

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, April 3, 1675.

When my letters travel like tortoises by the slow conveyance of the carrier, and you find them in a box of clothes, which are generally two or three months on the road, I do not wonder at your being angry with me. I should even be sorry if you had not a desire to scold me; but you see I have not been to blame, and if my niece at Sainte-Marie has calculated upon the pleasure of setting us at variance, she is completely taken in; for I think we

have had so many quarrels, that we shall quarrel no more for ever.

The Maréchale d'Humières speaks for your return whenever a favourable opportunity offers, and speaks so well, and with so much courage and judgment, that she deserves to succeed in your favour; but the hour is not come: that of the departure of all the world is approaching. There was a rumour of peace, and you know there has been a change of plenipotentiaries; in the meantime we are always going to war, and the Governors and Lieutenants-General of Provinces are returning to their posts. All these separations affect me painfully. I think also that Madame de Grignan will not leave us without emotion: she has desired me to make you a thousand remembrances for her. You have reason to be satisfied with her heart: she loses no opportunity of showing me how much she esteems you; and let me here express my esteem for my niece de Bussy. She thinks as you do; and what she has written to me very much reminds me of your manners.

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Mademoiselle* DE BUSSY, *afterwards Marquise* DE COLIGNY.

(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *Letter to her Father.*)

I wish you, my dear, a very good and agreeable husband. If he is equal to your merit, he will be wanting in nothing.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *continues her Letter to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

As I was writing the above, I received a letter which informs me that this husband is found. I think it singular that the intelligence should have arrived so perfectly *apropos*. I entreat you, my dear cousin, to inform me of the particulars. If the name had been made on purpose, it could not have been more to our wishes. Pray tell me a word of the person and of his residence.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *writes a few more lines to Mademoiselle* DE BUSSY.

My dear niece, I take extreme interest in your fate. My daughter already congratulates you, and embraces you with all her heart.

Amiable father, amiable daughter, adieu. I am wholly yours.

*LETTER 296

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, May 20, 1675.

I think I am mad in not having written to you upon the intended marriage of my niece: but in reality, I am almost mad, and this is the only good reason I can give you. My son joins the army in three days, my daughter goes to Provence in a few more: you must not think that with the pain of such separations I can preserve anything like good sense. Take pity on me, therefore, and believe that in all my tribulations I feel the injustice that has been done you. I highly approve M. de Coligny's alliance: it appears to me a good establishment for my niece, and, with respect to the description of the gentleman, I am satisfied with your account. I beg my compliments to both, and indeed to all three; for I suppose you are not at present very far asunder. Adieu, my dear cousin; my dear niece, adieu.

LETTER 297

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Monsieur* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Tuesday, May 22, 1675.

As I have the honour to be acquainted with your lady, and know how well she delivers the compliments

that are intrusted to her care; I think it proper to let you know myself, that I love you too much, and that I should be extremely obliged to you if you would love me a little in return. You must allow that nothing can be more reasonable; it is absolutely giving one's love away, to make a bargain of this kind.

We miss you sadly; we used to delight in seeing you return home every evening, and in enjoying your company, which is very agreeable; and let me tell you another thing, that except when we hate you, we love you extremely. The heroine I expect will not return so soon; she is very dull, but I am used to see her so when you are absent. It is hotter at Besançon[1], than in the port of Toulon. You know how severely poor St.-Geran has been wounded; and that his pretty wife, and Madame de Villars, immediately set out to see him. It was reported he was dead; but by letters of the eighteenth, we hear he is somewhat better. As you are not quite at liberty to marry his widow, I presume you are very willing he should live. I have sent you one of the prettiest Fables[2] you have ever read. Are you acquainted with anyone that is as complete a courtier as the Fox?

I am perfectly charmed with the praises you bestow on my grand-daughter; I assure you I place to my own account all the fondness you show her. Adieu, my dearest Comte; it is scarcely possible to embrace you more affectionately than I do. My son sends you a thousand compliments.

[1] The King was then assisting in person at the siege of Besançon.

[2] A Fable of La Fontaine's, called *The Lion's Court* (La Cour du Lion).

LETTER 298

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Livry, Monday, May 27, 1675.

How dreadful is the day, my child, that ushers in absence! How did you bear it? For my part, I felt all the bitterness and grief I imagined I should, and had so long dreaded. What a moment was that of our separation! How bitter the farewell, how melancholy the parting between two persons who are so devoted to each other! But I will not continue the subject, nor *celebrate,* as you used to say, all the thoughts that oppress my heart. I am sure you were affected at embracing me for the last time [1]. I returned to Paris in a condition that you may easily imagine: Madame de Coulanges gave way to me in everything. I stopped first at Cardinal de Retz's, where my grief so much increased, that I sent to request M. de La Rochefoucauld, Madame de La Fayette, and Madame de Coulanges, who were all come to see me, to excuse my receiving them: we should conceal our weakness before the strong. The good Cardinal entered into all my distress; indeed the great friendship and esteem he has for you make him sympathise with me in my loss. His picture is being painted by a monk of St.-Victor; and I believe, notwithstanding Caumartin, he will give it to you. He sets off in a few days; his secret [2] has got wind, and his domestics are bathed in tears.

Do not condemn me, my dear child, for what I felt when I got home. How different did everything appear! What solitude! what gloom! There was your room, your

[1] The mother and daughter took their leave of each other at Fontainebleau, whither Madame de Coulanges and Madame de Sévigné conducted Madame de Grignan on her way.

[2] The Cardinal de Retz had taken the resolution to retire to Commerci, with a design to retrench his expenses, in order to pay off his debts before he died, in which he was happy enough to sueeeed.

closet, and your portrait—but ah! the dear original was gone! M. de Grignan will perfectly understand my meaning, and enter into all my feelings on the occasion. The next morning, which was yesterday, I awoke at five o'clock; so I got up, and called upon Corbinelli and the Abbé, and brought them hither with me. We have had incessant rains, and I very much fear lest the roads in Burgundy should be spoiled. We amuse ourselves here with reading the *Maxims*, and Corbinelli explains them to me. He uses all his endeavours to teach me the proper government of my heart. I shall be a considerable gainer by this excursion, if I am happy enough to retain his lessons. I intend returning to-morrow; I stood in need of this short repose, to recover my senses a little, and make my face fit to be seen.

LETTER 299

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, May 29, 1675.

Let me entreat you, my dear, to be persuaded, that you have not failed in any respect. One of your reflections would be more than sufficient to efface the remembrance of a crime; how much more those slight inadvertencies which would be remarked by no one but ourselves! Believe me, when I assure you, I can entertain no other sentiments for you but those of the warmest affection, which can end only with my life. While at Livry, I endeavoured to learn the means of parrying off these attacks of tenderness; but they returned with such vehemence to the charge, that my reason would have sunk beneath the effort. However, I trust that the exercise of devotion, and the love of God, will restore peace to my mind. To this consideration, and this alone, you must yield.

Corbinelli has been my only comfort at Livry: his turn of mind pleases me; and his attachment to me is so

great, that I can open my whole heart to him. I returned hither from Livry yesterday, and stopped at our good Cardinal's, who has made himself dearer to me by the regard he expresses for you, than by any other tie that connected him before. He is full of business: he passes his Whitsuntide at St.-Denis, but is to return here again for a week or ten days. Nothing is now talked of but his intended retreat. Everyone speaks of it according to his humour, though it doubtless calls for general admiration. Mesdames de Lavardin, de La Troche, and de Villars, overwhelm me with notes and attentions; but I am not yet in a fit state to profit by their kindness. Madame de La Fayette is at St.-Maur: Madame de Langeron has a violent swelling in her head; it is feared that it will prove fatal.

The Queen and Madame de Montespan, on Monday last, had an interview of two hours at the Carmelites in the Rue au Bouloi; and parted seemingly very well pleased with each other. I wrote to you the day before yesterday, and directed the letter to the care of the Chamarier at Lyons: I should be very sorry if it had miscarried; for there was one from our Cardinal enclosed, as there is likewise in this. Your letter is calculated to affect the heart and the soul. M. de Coulanges shall be informed of your kind remembrance of him. It is true we should not lose a single moment at the time of parting; I should have been extremely sorry not to have accompanied you as far as Fontainebleau: the instant of separation was indeed terrible, but it would have been still worse here. I will never lose a moment when I can see you; I have nothing to reproach myself with on that score, and in order to reconcile myself with Fontainebleau, I will come and meet you there. God will supply me with the means of preserving my life; be under no concern, therefore, about my health; I am very careful of it for your sake: you need never be uneasy for those who weep readily. God preserve me from those sorrows that deny the relief of tears! It is true, that some thoughts and some words affect us

strangely, but there is no danger for those who can weep. I have given tidings of you, to your friends; I thank you, my dear Comtesse, for your delightful distinction.

The Maréchal de Créqui is besieging Dinan. It is said that there is a commotion at Strasbourg: some are for permitting the Emperor's troops to pass, while others are for adhering strictly to the promise they made M. de Turenne. I have had no news of the warriors. I am informed the Chevalier de Grignan has had the ague; but you will hear of that more particularly from himself.

LETTER 300

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, May 31, 1675.

I have received only your first letter yet, my dear child; but that is invaluable. I have seen nothing since your absence, and every fresh person reminds me of it: they talk to me of you; they pity me: they....but stop: is it not such thoughts as these we should pass lightly over? Let us then do so.

I was yesterday at Madame de Verneuil's on my way from St.-Maur, where I had been with Cardinal de Retz. At the Sully Mansion, I met Mademoiselle de Lannoy[1], who is just married to the old Comte de Montrevel; the wedding was held there: you never saw a bride so pert: she bustles about the house, and calls *husband,* as if she had been married for twenty years. This same husband of hers, you must know, is very much troubled with the ague: he expected his fit the day after he was married, but missed it: upon which Fieubet said, "We have found a remedy for the ague, but who can tell us the dose?" Mesdames

[1] Adrienne-Philippe-Thérèse de Lannoy, who had been Maid of Honour to the Queen, was married to Jacques-Marie de La Baume-Montrevel in 1675, and not in 1672, as it is said by mistake in the *History of the Great Officers of the Crown.*

de Castelnau, Louvigny, Sully, and Fiesque, were there. I leave you to guess what these charming women said to me. My friends are too solicitous about me; they harass me; but I do not lose a single moment that I can spend with our dear Cardinal. These letters will inform you of the arrival of the Coadjutor; I saw and embraced him this morning. He is to have a conference this evening with his Eminence and M. d'Hacqueville on the steps he is to take. He has hitherto remained incog.

The Duchesse has lost Mademoiselle d'Enghien: one of her sons is going to die besides; her mother is ill: Madame de Langeron is already under ground; the Prince and the Duc in the army; ample subjects for tears, and, as I am told, she is not sparing of them. I leave d'Hacqueville to tell you news of the war; and the Grignans to write to you about the Chevalier: if he should return hither, I will take as much care of him as of my own son. I imagine you are now upon the tranquil Saône: our minds ought to resemble this calm view, but our hearts perpetually seduce them: mine is wholly with my daughter. I have already told you, that my greatest difficulty is to divert my thoughts from you, for they all tend to the same point.

Ten o'clock at Night.

Here we are altogether at my Abbé's. The Coadjutor is as happy this evening as he was perplexed in the morning. The Abbé de Grignan has managed the Archbishop of Paris [1] so well, that the Coadjutor will be received by him as a very dear and agreeable Deputy: so he is in high spirits. To-morrow he is to see M. de Paris, and will then resume the title of Coadjutor of Arles, which he has quitted for the last twenty-four years, for the more humble one of the Abbé d'Aiguebère, under which he concealed himself. I am only sorry for you, my dear, who will not have his society, which must always be a loss, but especially in Provence. The Abbé is of opinion, that the

[1] François de Harlay, Archbishop of Paris.



Js Bte DE GRIGNAN,
COADJUTEUR D'ARLES.

Peint par Stresor. *Grave par C.L. Masquelier*

Chevalier's fever will be tractable enough to allow of his continuing his journey. D'Hacqueville says, that Dinan is given up [1].

Adieu, my dearest. You only are wanting to make our party complete: you are beloved by everyone of us. This I think you need not doubt.

LETTER 301

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, June 5, 1675.

I have not received any of your letters since that from Sens; you will therefore easily conceive how anxious I am to be informed of your health and safety. I am fully persuaded you have written to me, and complain of nothing but the management, or rather mismanagement, of the post. According to the calculations of your friends here, you should be by this time at Grignan, unless you were detained at Lyons during the holidays. In short, my dear child, I have accompanied you step by step all the way, and am in hopes the Rhône behaved with proper respect to you. I have been at Livry with Corbinelli; but returned here with all the haste I could, that I might not lose a moment in seeing our dear Cardinal. The great affection he has for you, and the long friendship which has subsisted between him and me, have attached me to him very sincerely: I see him every evening from eight till ten, and I think he is very glad to have me with him till his bed-time. Our conversation is constantly about you; this is a subject we are fond of expatiating upon, and indeed it seems the master-sentiment of both hearts. He is for coming hither, but I cannot bear this house when you are not in it.

The Nuncio informed him yesterday, that he had just learned by a courier from Rome, that he was appointed

[1] This occurred on the 28th of May.

to a Cardinalship. The Pope [1] has lately made a promotion of his creatures, as it is called. The crowns are put off for these five or six years, and consequently M. de Marseilles [2]. The Nuncio told Bonvouloir, who went to congratulate him on his promotion, that he hoped His Holiness would not now accept Cardinal de Retz's resignation of his hat; that he should use all his endeavours to dissuade His Holiness from doing so, as he had the honour of being his colleague: so now we have another Cardinal, Cardinal Spada. Cardinal de Retz sets out on Tuesday; I dread the day; for I shall suffer extremely in losing so valuable a friend: his courage seems to increase in proportion as that of his friends diminishes.

The Duchesse de La Vallière pronounced her vows yesterday [3]. Madame de Villars promised to take me to see it; but by some misunderstanding, we thought we should not get places. Nothing more, however, was necessary than to present ourselves at the door, though the Queen had given out that the admission should not be general; and, after all, we did not go. Madame de Villars was very much vexed at it. The beautiful Duchesse performed this action like every other of her life, in the most charming manner possible: she is surprisingly handsome: but you will be astonished to hear that M. de Condom's (Bossuet's) sermon was not so good as was expected. The Coadjutor was there; he will tell you how well the affair goes on, with respect to M. de Paris and M. de St. Paul; but he finds the shade of M. de Toulon and the spirit of M. de Marseilles every where.

Madame de Coulanges goes from hence on Monday

[1] Clement X.

[2] Toussaint de Forbin-Janson, Bishop of Marseilles, and afterwards Bishop of Beauvais, was not made Cardinal till 1690, at the promotion by Alexander VIII.

[3] For more than three years she had only received at Court insults from her rival, and unkindness from the King. She remained there, she said, merely from a spirit of penitence, and added, "When the life of a Carmelite appears to me too severe, I have only to call to mind what those persons made me suffer," pointing to the King and to Madame de Montespan.

with Corbinelli: this deprives me of my companions. You know how good Corbinelli is to me, and how kindly he enters into all my sentiments. I am convinced of his friendship, and feel his absence; but, my child, after having lost you, of what else can I complain? It is true that you are interested in my complaints, because he is one of those with whom I most enjoyed the consolation of speaking of you; for you must not imagine, that those to whom I cannot speak freely are as agreeable to me as those who enter into my feelings. You seem to me to be apprehensive that I make myself ridiculous, and that I am too apt to divulge my sentiments on this pleasing subject. No, no, my dear, fear nothing; I am able to govern the torrent. Trust to me, and let me love you, till it shall please God to take you out of my heart, in order to place himself there; for you can yield to none but him. In short, my heart is so entirely occupied with, and so full of you, that finding myself incapable of any other thought, I have been forbidden from performing the devotions of the season. Adieu, my dear child, for the present: I shall finish my letter this evening.

I have just received your letter from Mâcon; I cannot yet read it without the fountain playing its old tricks: my heart is so extremely sensible, that the least thing that affects it quite overcomes me. You may imagine that, with this fine disposition, I frequently meet with opportunities to try it: but, pray, have no fears for my health. I can never forget the philosophy you inspired me with the evening before we parted; I improve by it as much as I can; but I have such an habitual weakness, that in spite of your good lessons, I often yield to my emotion.

Our Cardinal will have left me before you receive this; it will be a melancholy day for me, for I am extremely attached to his person, his merit, his conversation, which I enjoy as much as I can, and the friendship he expresses for me. His soul is of so superior an order, that it is not to be expected that his life should be attended with only common events. He that makes it a law to himself, to

do always what is most great and heroic, must place his retreat in some proper part of his life, like a shade beautifully disposed in a piece of painting, and leave his friends to lament it.

How facetious you are, my dear child, with the newspaper in your hand! What! can you derive amusement from it already? I did expect that you would at least have waited till you had crossed the vile Durance. The conversation between the King and the Prince appears to me very humorous; I think you would have been entertained with it even here. I have just received a letter from the Chevalier, who is well; he is with the army, and has only had five attacks of the ague: this is one subject of uneasiness less; but his letter, which is full of friendship, is in the true German style; for he will not believe a syllable of the retreat of Cardinal de Retz: he desires me to tell him the truth, which I shall not fail to do. I shall distribute all your compliments, and I am sure they will be well received: everybody thinks it an honour to be remembered by you: M. de Coulanges was quite proud of it. The Coadjutor will relate to you the success of his journey; but he will not boast that he was on the point of being stifled at Madame de Louvois' by twenty women, who each supposed they had a right to embrace him: this occasioned a confusion, an oppression, a suffocation, of which the bare idea almost suffocates me, accompanied by the most high-flown, reiterated, and affected compliments that it is possible to conceive: Madame de Coulanges describes the scene very drolly. I wish you may have the company at Grignan you mention. My son is well: he sends you a thousand remembrances. M. de Grignan will be very willing for me to embrace him, now that he is no longer occupied with the bustle of the boat.

M. de Rochefort is besieging Huy; the town is taken, the Castle still resists. M. de Bagnols gave a fricassee the other day to Madame d'Heudicourt, Madame de Sanzei, and M. de Coulanges, at the *Maison Rouge*: they heard five or six loud voices, shrieks, high words, and ridi-

culous proposals, in the next room: M. de Coulanges would see what it was; and he found there Madame Baillet, Madaillan, one of the Pourceaugnacs, the beautiful Englishwoman, and Montalais. Montalais fell on her knees and humbly entreated Coulanges not to say a word of the matter; but he contrived that all Paris should know it, and Montalais is in despair, that the use she makes of her precious Englishwoman should be discovered.

Adieu, my dearest; I conclude, that I may not weary you. Alas! what a change it is, to have no other pleasure than that of receiving your letters, after having been so long accustomed to the happiness of seeing and conversing with you!

Madame DE COULANGES *writes to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.
(*Enclosed in Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *Letter.*)

We only regret those we hate: this is a truth I have learnt since you left us. We only follow those we hate; for Saturday next I set out upon your footsteps, and shall not be pleased with my journey till I have crossed the Rhône. I was to-day at St.-Cloud, where I was asked after you, which gave me no small pleasure; for my hatred of you so very nearly resembles friendship, that I am often mistaken in it. I am M. de Grignan's most obedient servant.

LETTER 302

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, June 7, 1675.

At length, my dear, I am reduced to the solitary comfort of receiving your letters; it is true that these are very dear to me, but I cannot reflect that I have had you for fifteen months together, without feeling the most lively emotions of tenderness and grief. There are some people in the world who would persuade me that my excess

of fondness was troublesome to you, and that my constant anticipation of your wants and inclinations, which in consequence became my own, must have been insipid and repugnant to you. I know not, my dear child, how true this may be; but I can safely say, that it never was my intention to make you uncomfortable. I must confess that I have perhaps a little too much indulged my own inclination, and suffered you as seldom out of my sight as possible; and this proceeded from my being unable to deprive myself of the pleasure of seeing you; but I had never any reason to think this behaviour was irksome to you. After all, my dear girl, let me beg you to think well of the great confidence I have in you, and to believe that it is impossible for any one to be more perfectly forlorn and wretched than I am in your absence; you give me excellent advice as to my self-government on these occasions; I attend to your lessons, and endeavour to put them in practice. I do as other people do, I go out, and I come in; but when I can talk of you I am happy, and a few tears relieve me inexpressibly. I know where I can indulge myself in this liberty; you judge rightly that having seen you everywhere, it is difficult to me, in the beginning, not to be sensible to a thousand things I meet with in my way.

Yesterday I saw La Villars, who has a most sincere regard for you; we were alone, indulging ourselves in solitude at the Tuileries. I dined in the forenoon with the Cardinal, and could not help being afflicted at my not seeing you there. I had a good deal of conversation with the Abbé de Saint-Mihel, to whom we give in trust, as it were, the person of His Eminence. The Abbé seems to me a very good sort of man; he appears to have a sound judgment and clear reason, and expresses the greatest regard for our friend; so that we hope he will be of service to him in taking care of his health, and preventing him from injuring it, by too strict an attention to the duties of his retirement. They are to set out on Tuesday; this will be another day of grief for me, though not to be compared to that of Fontainebleau. Think, my child, that a fort-

night has already passed, and that the days slide away in whatever way they are spent. Everyone you have mentioned is delighted with your remembrance, and receives me better in consequence. I shall see our Cardinal this evening: he will have me stay an hour or two every evening with him before his bed-time, that I may take advantage of the little time that remains.

Corbinelli was with me when I received your letter, and shared in your pleasure in confounding the Jesuit; he wished heartily he had been a witness of your victory. Madame de La Troche was charmed with what you say of her. Be perfectly easy, my dear child, with respect to my health: I know you will hear no jesting upon that subject. The Chevalier de Grignan is quite well. I am going to send your letter to M. de Turenne. Our brethren are at St.-Germain. I have a great mind to send you La Garde's letter, which would give you a general view of the life that is led at Court. The King went to confession, and received the sacrament, on Whitsunday; so did Madame de Montespan [1]; her life is exemplary; she is wholly occupied with her workmen, and goes to Saint Cloud, where she plays at hoca.

Apropos, my hair stood on end the other day, when the Coadjutor told me, that when he went to Aix, he found M. de Grignan there playing at hoca! What madness! In the name of God, do not permit this; it is a point you ought to gain, if he has any love for you. I hope Pauline is well, since you do not mention her to me; I desire you will love her for the sake of her godfather, M. de La Garde. Madame de Coulanges has so well managed the Princesse d'Harcourt, that she herself begs your pardon a thousand times, for not being at home when you called to

[1] A momentary separation took place between the King and Madame de Montespan. But Bossuet, by whose exhortations this was effected, did not long enjoy his success. The lovers had no sooner met, and conversed again for a quarter of an hour, than they dismissed their scruples, and the birth of the Duchesse d'Orléans and the Comte de Toulouse was, according to Madame de Caylus, the consequence.

take leave of her. I would not have you trifle with her on this occasion. What you say about trees which shed their leaves is admirable; the unchangeableness of those in Provence [1] is absolutely tiresome. It is much better to grow green again, than to be always green. Corbinelli says that it is the property of God alone to be immutable, and that immutability in anything else is an imperfection: he was in a fine humour for philosophising to-day. Madame de La Troche and the Prior of Livry were here; and he amused himself in proving to them the attributes of the Deity. Adieu, my dearest child; I embrace you: but, alas! when shall I embrace you more closely? Life is so short! But I must pass over that thought. Your letters are at present the only objects of my impatience.

LETTER 303

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, June 12, 1675.

I had the happiness yesterday of taking a solitary walk with His Eminence in the wood of Vincennes; he thought the air would do me good, and, as he had nothing particular to do, he proposed it to me. We were four hours together, and I hope I improved the time to my advantage: the subjects of our conversation were such as perfectly suited with his character. In losing him, I lose the only comfort I had, and cannot help weeping for myself, and for you also, my child, when I think of the affection he has for us both. His departure will quite overwhelm me.

Madame de Coulanges set out last Tuesday very melancholy, but very well pleased to have Corbinelli with her. Do you know anything of M. de St. Vallier's affair?

[1] In Provence there are several kinds of trees that never lose their leaves, but remain green throughout the year; as the olive, the orange-tree, the evergreen oak, the laurel, etc.

he was in love with Mademoiselle de Rouvroi, and prevailed on His Majesty to sign the marriage-contract, nothing more. He then very confidently borrowed ten thousand crowns of Madame de Rouvroi, as the portion he was to receive with her daughter: having the money in his hands, he went home, sent her a promissory note for it, disappeared, and is gone nobody knows where. When the King was informed of the affair, he said, M. de St. Vallier might make a jest of Madame de Rouvroi and her daughter if he pleased, but that he would not suffer him to make a jest of him; upon which he has had notice given him, that unless he immediately returns to fulfill the articles, by marrying the young lady, he must never think of returning again. His Majesty has likewise ordered him to resign his post, or that it shall immediately be taxed. This conduct of St. Vallier is so completely ridiculous, that everyone imagines it is a trick to draw the father in to give his consent to the match. The King has bestowed a *brevet de retenue* on St. Vallier of a hundred thousand livres, besides a pension of six thousand francs, in favour of the marriage. So you see these brevets are not so rare but that they are sometimes given.

I was yesterday evening with Madame de Sanzei and d'Hacqueville: I saw Vassé come in, and thought it was his ghost, but by some enchantment it was his body. He is here incognito, and sends a thousand remembrances to you. I regret the three weeks you might have passed with Cardinal de Retz, who does not set out till Saturday. I wonder how, day after day, and every day sad and gloomy, the time has passed since your departure. Did I tell you that the Duc has lost another son? This is the second within a week.

I have received yours of the fifth from Grignan, which has relieved me from the uneasiness I was under concerning your health. You say what is very true, and what I feel powerfully, that "the days on which we do not expect letters, are occupied in expecting the days on which we are to receive them." There is a certain degree in

friendship, in which we always feel alike; but you require calmness from your friends, which it is very difficult to promise you; for instance, you will not have them employ themselves in serving you, in being solicitous, and interesting themselves about you; I have already told you, that it is wholly impossible for them to agree to this; for, unluckily, these are the very things they have the strongest inclination to do; but as it is more common for our friends to serve us, than to wish our enemies only to do so, I do not think, my dear child, that you will gain your cause, or prevent us from showing our friendship whenever an opportunity offers, as it has been the case from the creation of the world, or, in other words, since there has been anything like affection in the human race. You have given me great pleasure by mentioning my dear grand-children to me. I imagine you will have great joy in remarking the dawn of their little reasons. I could wish you would not go to Aix; you will be more comfortable at Grignan, and it will be the means of hastening M. de Grignan's return: obtain this little favour too from him, and persuade the Archbishop to pass the warm weather with you; you will not be incommoded by the heat, with the assistance of your northeast wind. I expect a long letter from M. de Grignan, I assure him: can it be possible that he should find the days too short to write to me, when I find them so long, that I really think a house could be built in a day if it were begun early in the morning? Madame de Montespan is going on with hers, and amuses herself greatly among the workmen. Monsieur visits her frequently; she goes sometimes to St.-Cloud to a party at *ombre,* and several ladies go to Clagny to visit her. Madame de Fontevrault, who went there full of joy to spend a few days with her father, whom she adores, was shocked almost to death at finding him speechless, and on the point of relapsing into the same state of lethargy in which he was some time ago. The Abbé Têtu continues to manage her as he pleases; I cannot but admire the care that Providence takes to amuse him; for no sooner is one (Madame

de Coulanges) gone to Lyons, than another comes from Anjou [1].

It is said at M. Colbert's, and at the Maréchal de Villeroi's, that Montécuculli [2] has very humbly repassed the Rhine, and that M. de Turenne, through excess of civility, has reconducted him back, and repassed that river after him: our enemies, poor creatures, are at their wit's end; the very sight of M. de Turenne confounds them. Huy is not yet taken. I am making up my packet at the Cardinal's. He has a slight attack of the gout. I hope this will be a means of putting a stop to his leaving us. I pity you for not having the pleasure of seeing him while he is yet among us.

We hear that Huy was certainly taken on the fifth or sixth without the loss of a man. Yesterday the Queen went to a collation at Trianon. She stopped first at the Church, and then at Clagny, where she took up Madame de Montespan, and carried her in the coach with her to Trianon.

LETTER 304

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, June 14, 1675.

Instead of visiting you in your apartment, my dear child, I sit down to converse with you by letter; when I am so unfortunate as not to have you with me, the most natural consolation I can find is to write to you, to receive

[1] Madame de Caylus speaks thus of the Abbess of Fontevrault: "I have heard from persons who were acquainted with her, that it was impossible to unite in the same person a greater share of judgment, wit, and learning. Her learning was even the effect of her judgment. A nun without employment, she sought an amusement adapted to her situation: but neither science nor reading destroyed her natural sense."

[2] General of the Imperial Army, and one of the greatest Captains of that age.

your letters, to speak of you, or to take some step in your affairs. I passed the afternoon yesterday with Cardinal de Retz: you cannot possibly guess what we talk of when we are together. I always begin by telling you that you cannot love him too well, and that I think you happy in having so firmly fixed the kindness and affection he before felt for you. Let me know how you bear the air at Grignan, and whether it has already begun to prey upon you; how you enjoy your health, and how you look. Your portrait is very pleasing, but far less so than your person, without reckoning that it wants the power of speech. Be not uneasy about my health; the rule I observe at present is, to be irregular; I am not sensible of any indisposition; I dine alone; stay at home till five or six o'clock, and go in the evening, when I have no business of importance to keep me within, to the house of one of my friends. I walk or ride according to the distance, but I make everything yield to the pleasure of being with our Cardinal. I lose not a moment he can spare me, and he is very obliging in this respect. I shall feel more sensibly his departure and his absence; but this does not prevent my indulging myself in the pleasure of his conversation: I never think of sparing myself; after having endured the pangs of parting with you, I have nothing to fear from any less tender attachment. Were it not for him, and for your affairs, I should go a little to Livry; but I make every consideration yield to these, which are above all my little pleasures.

The Queen went to see Madame de Montespan at Clagny on the day I told you she took her up in her carriage as she passed; she went into her room, where she stayed half an hour; she then went into M. du Vexin's, who was a little indisposed, and afterwards took Madame de Montespan to Trianon, as I informed you. Some ladies have been to Clagny: they found the fair lady so occupied with the building and enchantments that are preparing for her, that I fancy her like Dido building Carthage; but the resemblance will not hold good in any other respect. M. de La Rochefoucauld and Madame de La

Fayette have entreated me to present their compliments to you. We fear you will have too much of the grande-duchesse[1]. A prison is preparing for her at Montmartre, with which she would be frightened, if she did not hope to change it; but she will be caught: they are delighted in Tuscany to have got rid of her. Madame de Sully is gone: Paris is become a desert. I already wish myself out of it. I dined yesterday with the Coadjutor at the Cardinal's: I have left him in charge to inform you of that part of Ecclesiastical History. M. Joli[2] preached at the opening of the Assembly of the Clergy, but as he took an ancient text, and preached only ancient doctrine, his sermon seemed a piece of antiquity altogether. It was a fine subject too for reflection.

The Queen dined to-day at the Carmelites du Bouloi, with Madame de Montespan, and Madame de Fontevrault: you will see how this friendship will end. They say that M. de Turenne, as it were, reconducts the enemy's troops to their quarters. My heart is much oppressed with the thoughts of losing the Cardinal; the repeated intercourse of friendship and conversation which has so lately passed between us, redoubles my grief; he goes to-morrow. I have not yet received your letters. Believe, my dear, that it is not possible to love you more than I love you: nothing animates me but what has some relation to you. Madame de Rochebonne has written to me very affectionately; she told me with what feelings you received and read my letters at Lyons. I see, my dear, you are grown weak as well as I.

D'Hacqueville has sent you such a large packet, that it would be ridiculous to pretend to tell you any news now.

[1] Marguerite-Louise d'Orléans, daughter of Gaston de France, Duc d'Orléans, and of Marguerite de Lorraine, his second wife.

[2] Claude Joli, Bishop of Agen.

LETTER 305

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, June 19, 1675.

I assure you, my dearest child, that next to the leave I took of you at Fontainebleau, to which no comparison can be made, I could not have taken a more melancholy one, than I did yesterday of Cardinal de Retz, at M. de Caumartin's, four leagues from hence. I dined there on Monday, and found him in the midst of his three faithful friends; their dejected countenances drew tears into my eyes: and when I saw His Eminence displaying his usual firmness of mind, and the same kindness and tenderness to me, I could scarcely support the sight. We spent the afternoon in one of the most agreeable woods in the world; and we stayed there till six o'clock in the evening, engaged in a variety of conversations, so good, so kind, so delightful, so obliging, both to you and me, that I am deeply affected with it; and I tell you again, that you cannot love and honour him too much. Madame de Caumartin came from Paris, and with the three gentlemen who had remained in the house, joined us in the wood. I would have returned to Paris, but they detained me without much difficulty. I slept ill; in the morning I embraced our dear Cardinal with tears, without the power of saying a word to the rest of the company. I returned hither very melancholy; and I am not yet recovered from the grief of this separation: the fountain was in a good train: but, in truth, this would have opened it, if it had been ever so firmly closed. That of Madame de Savoie[1] must have opened all its springs. Were you not surprised at the sudden and unexpected death of the Due de Savoie (Charles-Emmanuel) at the age of forty? I am sorry the account you sent me of the Assembly of the Clergy has not been read;

[1] Marie-Jeanne-Baptiste de Savoie-Nemours, Duchesse de Savoie.

the fidelity of the post is sometimes an inconvenience. These priests give four millions five hundred thousand crowns; which is as much again as the other Assembly: the way in which affairs are conducted there is admirable: the Coadjutor will give you an account of it. I was delighted with what you tell me of Lannoy[1], and with the demands under the name of establishment. I shall give your remembrances to Mesdames de Villars and de Vins: it is who shall be mentioned in my letters. The Chevalier de Buouson is gone from hence. He brings you a fan, which I think extremely pretty: instead of Cupids, there is a group of little chimney-sweepers. Can it be true, that La Simiane is separated from her husband on the pretence of his gallantries? What folly! I should have advised her to have retaliated. I think the time long, as well as you, my dear, and perhaps longer than you, from one post to another. Time, who is often disagreeable to us on account of the swiftness of his flight, sometimes slackens his wing, as you say; in short, we are never contented. I cannot yet accustom myself not to see you, meet you, find you, nor even expect you. I am grieved at your absence, and unable to divert my thoughts from it. The Cardinal would have effaced you a little from my mind; but you are so much mingled in our conversations, that after I had well considered it, I found it was you who rendered him so dear to me. You see, I improve but little by your philosophy: I am pleased to find that you yourself are not wholly exempt from the weakness of human nature.

There have been some few *grippings* in Brittany, and at Rennes there was a fit of the *stone colic*. M. de Chaulnes, attempting to disperse the people by his presence, was sent home with a shower of stones: but really this is carrying their insolence to a great height. The little person has written to her sister, that she wants sadly to be at Sully, for that she is frightened to death every day; you know well what she went to look for in Brittany.

The Duc is engaged in the siege of Limbourg. The

[1] Madame de Montrevel.

Prince remains with the King: you may judge of his uneasiness. I do not think that my son is at this siege, nor was at that of Huy. I am every day in expectation of hearing from him; but how great is my impatience to hear from you, my dear!

I send you a little piece, written with much spirit; it is a portrait of the Cardinal. The person who wrote it [1] is not one of his intimate friends, and has no desire that he should ever see it. He does not pretend to flatter him. I like the piece for all these reasons. I send it you; but I beg you not to give a copy of it. It is so tiresome to hear our own praises addressed to ourselves, that it is a pleasure to be assured there was no design of gratifying us, and that what is said is the simple unaffected truth. We are expecting news from Limbourg and Germany, which keeps every one in painful suspense. Adieu, my dear child; your portrait is delightful; I want to embrace it, for it seems to start from the canvass. I wonder that anything contributes to my happiness at present.

Portrait *of M. le Cardinal* de Retz [2].

By the Duc de La Rochefoucauld.

(*Enclosed in Madame* de Sévigné's *Letter to her Daughter.*)

"Paul de Gondi, Cardinal de Retz, is a man of an elevated, and capacious mind, but with more ostentation than real greatness of soul. His memory is extraordinary; his expressions have more force than politeness. His disposition is so easy, that he tamely and weakly endures the complaints and reproaches of his friends. He has a little piety, with some show of religion; and the appearance

[1] M. de La Rochefoucauld.

[2] As this Portrait has not been exhibited either in the Gallery of Paintings, or the *Memoirs* of Mademoiselle, which contain the greatest part of the characters that were written at that time, it is presumed that it will be seen with greater pleasure, as being drawn by a masterly hand.

of ambition, without the passion. His vanity and advisers have led him to undertake things of great importance; but such as were almost always inconsistent with his profession. Without any design of advantage to himself, he has been the means of exciting the greatest commotions in the State; and, far from declaring himself the enemy of Cardinal Mazarin, with a view of succeeding him in his department, he thought of nothing but rendering himself formidable to that Minister, and indulging himself in the false vanity of being considered his opponent. He had address enough to obtain a Cardinal's hat, by availing himself of the public misfortunes; he endured imprisonment with fortitude, and owed his liberty entirely to his boldness. His indolence supported him with honour, during several years of obscurity and exile; he maintained himself in the Archbishopric of Paris against all Mazarin's power; yet resigned it after that Minister's death, without knowing what he did, and without making use of that conjuncture to serve either his friends or himself. He was present at several conclaves, where his conduct always increased his reputation. He is naturally indolent; nevertheless, he is indefatigable when instigated by necessity; and when he has finished his business, he relapses into his former indifference. He has great presence of mind, and is so happy in turning to his advantage the incidents of fortune, that one could almost suppose he had foreseen and desired them. He loves story-telling; he wishes to surprise all who hear him, with extraordinary adventures, and is often more indebted to his imagination than his memory. Most of his good qualities are counterfeit; and nothing has contributed so much to his reputation, as knowing how to throw a pleasing light on his imperfections. Whatever pains he may have taken to appear engrossed by hatred or friendship, he is equally insensible to both. He is incapable of indulging in envy or avarice, perhaps through virtue, or perhaps through indolence. He has borrowed more of his friends than any individual could hope to repay; his vanity has been gratified in finding he had so much credit, and in endeavouring to

acquit himself. He has neither taste nor delicacy; amuses himself with everything, and is pleased with nothing. He has a great address in concealing the superficialness of his knowledge. His retreat is at once the most dazzling and the falsest action of his life. It is a sacrifice he has made to his pride, under the pretext of devotion; he flies from a Court he can no longer attend, and retires from a world that already avoids him."

LETTER 306

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday evening, June 21, 1675.

I am so sad, my dear child, at not having heard from you this week, that I hardly know what to do with myself. I cannot tell whom to blame; I well know it is not your fault, for I am certain you have written to me. I dread my journey to Brittany, on account of the confusion into which it throws our correspondence. I have ended your two affairs here; so that I shall now set out as soon as possible, that I may the sooner return; and I cannot return, if I do not first set out.

The siege of Limbourg still continues: we are all in painful expectation of news from thence, as well as from M. de Turenne, who, they say, is near enough to come to an engagement with this same Montécuculli. I am in hopes, however, that nothing will happen, because we expect so many different things. After all, we must submit to Providence. Though my son is not at Limbourg, I cannot help, however, being interested there. And now, my dear, be obliged to me, for I was yesterday bled in the foot, merely to please you, and by way of precaution for my journey; for I thought, as well as you, that it was necessary, considering the anxiety of mind I have laboured under for two months past. I have had a number of visitors, and am so fatigued with keeping my bed these

two days that I am quite stiff: it was a high jest to see how ill I bore this confinement. Mademoiselle de Méri laughed at me unmercifully. I have just had a letter from my son, who informs me, that they have got possession of the ditch and the half-moon at Limbourg, that the miners are at work at the bastion, that there are several of the officers and men killed and wounded, and that M. de La Marck has done wonders [1]. I am, my dear and lovely child, most truly yours.

LETTER 307

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, June 26, 1675.

I have received two packets at once, my very dear Comtesse; I concluded you had written to me. You are an excellent correspondent: and your friendship is accompanied and assisted by such charms as render it delightful. When I receive letters from Provence, it is a subject of joy to all who love me, as it is a grief to them when I am disappointed: to read your letters, and to answer them, is the first business of my life: everything else yields to this correspondence; and to love as I love you, makes every other attachment frivolous. Be assured I shall never fail to write to you twice a week, and if I were to write four times I should be equally punctual; punctual on account of the pleasure it gives me, not because I have promised it.

Madame du Pui-du-Fou came to pay me a visit: I had forgotten she was a widow, and took her weeds for a masquerade dress. The departure of Madame de Toscane from hence is much doubted here; your ill fortune will decide it. It is certain, my dear, that we are very near neighbours, compared to the distance between Aix and *The Rocks*; a great distance grieves me as much as it does

[1] Limbourg capitulated on the 20th of June, 1675.

you. Alas! we are cruelly separated, as we foresaw with sorrow last winter, when we were so near one another. Can there be in life a more cruel misfortune?

Our Cardinal will be to-morrow at Châlons; he has written to me very affectionately; I send you his letter. As to the cassolette[1] which he desired you to accept, do not oblige me, my dear, to return it. There is nothing noble in such fancied generosity. I think I am sufficiently disinterested; and that I have given proofs of it: but there are occasions when it is rude and ungrateful to refuse. Why should not the Cardinal have the privilege of making you such a present? To whom do you wish him to send this trifle? He has given up his plate to his creditors: if he should add this little piece to it, it might perhaps be valued at a hundred crowns. It is a curiosity, a token of remembrance, an ornament for a cabinet. Such presents ought to be received with affection and respect: and, as he observed last winter, it is insulting to refuse them; it is making them of too much consequence. I cannot therefore prevail with myself to cause him so much pain. Can you be sensible of the pleasure it will give him, to show you this little mark of his friendship, without being ashamed to refuse it with so much incivility? Are you to be told that this excess of vain-glory, in being above receiving a present, is a fault, and can gain you no credit? This is all I shall say upon the subject: it would be an insult to your understanding to add more. After all, it is to M. de Grignan that the Cardinal makes the present. I believe it is already sent from Commerci: I will inclose it in the parcel with your work.

The Coadjutor has laughed heartily at your comparison of cameos in painting to the history of France in verse. He was also very much amused at what you say of him and the Agent (of the clergy). You do not know half the charms of your letters; you give a wonderful turn to everything. We very well understood your answer to the Capuchin: "Father, how hot it is!" and we believe that,

[1] A perfuming pan or pot.

in the humour you are in, you can never go to confession. How is it possible to lay your heart open to strangers? It is as much as you can prevail upon yourself to do with your best friends. We hear your answer at this distance, and you could not have related your conversation more agreeably, unless you had told it us in person.

I thank you, my dear, for the pains you have taken to exculpate yourself from the charge of ever having been incommoded by my affection. There was no need of so kind an explanation. I believe of your tenderness everything you wish me to believe; this persuasion is the happiness of my life. You explain yourself very well upon that will of yours, which it was impossible for me to divine, because you willed nothing. I ought to have understood you; and I shall do better than I have done, because we only wanted to understand one another. When you are restored to me, believe me, my dear, you shall have a thouand times more reason to be satisfied with me than you have ever had: I wish we could already fix the day, when we might embrace each other.

You laugh, my child, at poor friendship; you think it is doing it too much honour to consider it an impediment to devotion; and that it is not of sufficient consequence, to be an obstacle to our salvation. We judge of everything by comparison: if it occupy our whole heart, then it is blamable; and whatever it may be that possesses us in this way, it renders us unfit to communicate. You see the affair of the Syndic has exempted me from the combat. In a word, it is a misfortune to have such lively passions. I must endeavour to render them more calm, and to recover the possession of my heart. I shall not be less yours, and I shall be more my own. Corbinelli was very urgent with me to take up this good resolution. It is true, that his absence adds to my uneasiness: he loves me much, and I love him; he is useful to me in every respect; but I must deprive myself of everything, during my journey to Brittany. And it is so necessary that I should go there, that I must not leave it to chance.

You must not on any account shave the head of the little Marquis. I have consulted the learned; it is the way to put his little brain into disorder, to give him rheums, sore eyes, and black teeth; in a word, he is too weak to bear it. Let his hair be cut short with scissors; this is all you can do at present.

The Cardinal's cook and steward will not leave him: their attachment is quite heroic; they prefer the honour of remaining with him to the best situations at Court: it is impossible to hear them without admiring their affection. Poor *Peau* has done better still; he has died: he fell sick the evening of the Cardinal's departure, and grief and fever together took him off in nine days. I saw him, and, though I cannot enter the house without sorrow, the servants who remained, made me come to admire them.

M. d'Hacqueville returned yesterday evening; I have not been able to see him without emotion. The Cardinal's three faithful friends quitted him at Jouare: I fear and wish to see the other two. The Cardinal has written me a second adieu. I beg him not to deprive me of the hope of seeing him again. I am extremely grieved at his retirement; I will let you know from time to time how he is. His courage appears to be infinite; I wish it may prove victorious.

I am very well recovered of my bleeding in the foot. I shall set out for Brittany very soon, but not before I have put the finishing-stroke to all your affairs here: otherwise I should not rest a moment in quiet. I am of your opinion with respect to what Philomela says; but we are equally to be pitied when we can find no place that brings pleasing images to our recollection, and when our recollection is so much alive, that we carry it incessantly along with us. I am persuaded our Cardinal will not soon forget us.

There are some passages of your letters so delightful and so affectionate, that I dare not undertake to answer them: I pretend to no more than to feel them truly, and estimate their value.

Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ'S *answer to a Letter of the* 19*th of June received from Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

I have received your letter, informing me of the illness of the poor little Marquis; I am very much concerned at it; and as for bleeding, I cannot comprehend that it can do any good, considering the terror it occasions to a child of three years old. In my time, we did not know what it was to bleed children. Madame de Sanzei persists in refusing to have her son bled: she gave him only a little powder for the worms, and he is recovered. I fear our child will be treated, in order to do him honour, like the children of the King and the Duc [1]. I shall have no rest, my dear, till I hear how this fever terminates.

As to what you say of the future respecting the Cardinal, it is true that I have seen him wholly taken up with the wish of showing you his friendship in the fullest extent, when he has paid his debts. This sentiment appeared to me worth imparting to you: but as you have two years to reflect on the way in which you will refuse his kindness, I think, my dear child, you must not take your measures so far off. God preserve our friend to us, and give us grace to be at that time in a situation to make him agree to our resolutions: it is unnecessary to vex him between this and then; and with regard to the cassolette, as he has not mentioned it to me for a long time, I should think I was doing as in Boccaccio, if, under the pretence of refusing, I had brought it to his recollection. I do not know what directions he has given respecting it.

M. de Turenne is very advantageously situated; there has been no engagement, as was reported. Our friends are all well in Flanders and in Germany. The beautiful little Madame de Saint-Valleri has the small-pox in its most virulent form.

[1] The Duc had just lost two of his children, within a few days of each other.

LETTER 308

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, June 28, 1675.

Madame de Vins expressed herself very affectionately about you yesterday, my dear; that is, in her way, but it is not a bad one: there seemed no *interlineations* in what she said.

We have no news. The King's good star has brought the Duc of Lorraine and the Prince of Orange across the Meuse again. M. de Turenne has now elbow-room, so that we are no longer confined in any part. I am rejoiced that my letters are so pleasing to you: I can hardly think they are so agreeable as you say they are. I know they have no stiffness in them. Our good Cardinal is gone to solitude; his departure gave me sorrow, and reminded me of yours. I have long remarked our cruel separations to the four corners of the world. It is very cold: we are obliged to have a fire, and so are you, which is more astonishing still. You judge well respecting *Quantova*; if she cannot return to her old ways, she will push her authority and grandeur beyond the clouds; but she must prepare to be loved the whole year without scruple: in the meantime her house is crowded by the whole Court, visits are paid alternately, and her consequence is unbounded. Be not uneasy respecting my journey to Brittany: you are too good and too attentive to my health. I will have nothing to do with La Mousse: the dullness of others weighs me down more than my own. I have no time to go to Livry. I have made a vow to expedite your affairs. I shall give your compliments to Madame de Villars and Madame de La Fayette. The latter has still a little fever upon her. Adieu, my dearest child, believe me to be most sincerely yours.

LETTER 309

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, July 3, 1675.

Good heavens, my dear child, how ill I bear your absence! I have sometimes such cruel moments, when I reflect how we are situated with respect to each other, that I can scarcely breathe; and notwithstanding all my endeavours to drive the painful idea from me, it will always return. I ask pardon of your philosophy, for thus exposing my weakness; but for once do not be angry with me for indulging myself in the relief of telling you what I so often suffer, and which I conceal from everyone besides. It is true, that Brittany will increase the distance between us: what madness! Methinks it looks as if we were going to throw ourselves into the sea, that we may have all France between us. God help us!

Two days ago I received a letter from our good Cardinal, who is on the point of entering upon his retirement: I believe it will not be able for a considerable time to eradicate from his heart the regard he has for you: I am perfectly satisfied with the share I know I have in his affection.

I find you are forced to make use of your authority to oblige your son to take medicine: I think you are quite right. A little exertion of authority does not at all misbecome you, but it is very lucky for you that your child never saw you take medicine, for I am afraid that in that case your example would overturn your precepts. I remember, and I dare say you have not forgotten, how your brother mimicked you on one of these occasions. After all, I am delighted that the little Marquis is out of danger; pray make use of the power you have over him, to manage him properly. I have entertained a very good opinion of him from his being so fond of you. I have been bled for your sake, and am very well.

But you wait my advice in regard to visiting the Grand Duchesse at Montélimart; M. de Grignan advises you to go, but you have no equipage ready: how must this be managed? Why I think you may take your own time, and go on foot. I can give a pretty good guess what your determination will be. We expect her here as if she were a *Colonne* or a Mazarin, for the oddity of leaving her husband, after having lived with him upwards of fifteen years; otherwise we give honour to whom honour is due. Her prison will be disagreeable, but she thinks it will be made as comfortable as possible. I am persuaded she would very much like the *house* [1] which is not to be let: ah! what a pity that it is not to be let; and that authority and consequence should be pushed so far, if the return has been well managed!

It is odd, that the interests of *Quantova* and all her policy should agree so well with Christianity; and that the advice of her friends should be exactly the same as M. de Condom's (Bossuet). You cannot think how triumphant she appears in the midst of her workmen, who are no less than twelve hundred. The Palace of the Sun, or the Enchanted Gardens of Armida, are poor in comparison of what hers will be. She is visited by the wife of her firm friend (the Queen), and by all the family in turn: she takes place neatly of all the Duchesses; and the lady (Madame de Richelieu) whom she got appointed, proves her gratitude every day by her actions. Your lamentations are very excellent over Brittany; I wish I had Corbinelli with me; you will have him at Grignan. Let me recommend him to your care. I am going to visit the rascals who throw stones into their patron's garden. I am told there are five or six hundred blue bonnets in Lower Brittany, who ought to be hanged, in order to teach them better manners. Upper Brittany is wise; it is my own country.

[1] It is easily understood, that this house means the King's Court. It was indeed said, that the Grand-Duchesse had only left Italy in the hope of making a conquest of the King.

My son sends me word that there is a detachment of ten thousand men; he is not of the number. The Prince and the Duc are there, but I was told yesterday that there is no danger, and that they were close to the enemy, the river only dividing them. No mention is made of M. de Turenne, except that he is so advantageously situated, as to be able to do what he pleases.

I imagined that the desire of being in favour with the Academy at Arles, might have made you wish to have some of M. de La Rochefoucauld's *Maxims*. The *Portrait* is his, and what made me approve it, and show it to the Cardinal, was, its being written without the least intention of being seen. It was a secret I made myself mistress of, as it were by force, from my fondness of seeing a panegyric upon the absent, by a person who was neither an intimate friend, nor a flatterer. Our Cardinal was as much pleased with it as I was, in observing the manner in which truth obliged even those who had no great regard for him to speak of him, when they imagined that he would never come to the knowledge of it [1]. We shall soon find how his retirement will sit upon him: unless it is the work of God, it cannot succeed.

We have had very cold weather here of late, but what most surprises me is, that you complain likewise of the cold in Provence: I do not remember finding it cold there in June. I see you living in perfect solitude, but I do not pity you; I keep my pity for those who are more proper objects, of which I am the first. I find great pleasure in being acquainted with the places, that contain those I love and think of perpetually. Not to know how to find them in idea, throws a disagreeable obscurity over the imagination: your bed-chamber and your private sitting-room wound me; and yet I sometimes retire there alone to think of you, as not willing to spare myself too much.

Do you not intend to repair your terrace? I cannot

[1] Cardinal de Retz, who at that period had not written his *Memoirs*, seems to have had this Portrait in remembrance, when he traced in his work the character of M. de La Rochefoucauld.

bear the idea that it should be in ruins, and deprive you of the only good walk you have. What a long letter! but you know what pleasure I take in chatting with you. Every other correspondence is neglected; for the great fish, you know, eat up the little ones. I embrace the little Marquis: pray let him know that he has another mamma in the world besides yourself: I am afraid he forgets me.

LETTER 310

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, July 5, 1675.

I sit down, my dear, to talk to you a little of our good Cardinal. I send you a letter he has written to you; pray advise him to write his history; it is what all his friends press him much to do. He tells me he is very well pleased with his desert, that he can look upon it without the least horror, and humbly hopes that God will support him in his weakness. He expresses the most sincere regard for you, and desires me not to think of leaving Paris till I have finished all your affairs. He remembers the time when you had the ague, and that he desired me, for his sake, to be careful of your health. I answer him in the same tone; he assures me that the most frightful solitude would not make him forget the friendship he owes us. He was received at St.-Mihel's[1] with transports of joy: the people were all on their knees, and received him as a protector sent by God. The troops, who were quartered there, are taken off, the officers having waited on him for his orders to send away or to leave as many as pleased. Cardinal Bonzi has assured me, that the Pope, without staying to receive our Cardinal's letter, had sent him a brief, to tell him that he supposes, and even desires, he will keep

[1] The place of the Cardinal's retreat, a remote village in the Province of Brittany.

his hat; that the preserving his rank and dignity will in no wise impede the work of his salvation: and it is moreover added, that His Holiness expressly commanded him not to make choice of any other place of retirement than St. Denis; but I much doubt this latter part of the report, so I only tell you my author for the former part.

I am convinced he thinks no more about the cassolette: if I had desired him not to send it, it would only have served to put him in mind of it, so I thought it was best to take no notice of it. There is no news of importance stirring. Everything goes on with spirit on M. de Turenne's side.

The other day there was a Madame Noblet, of the Vitri family, playing at *bassette* with MONSIEUR. Mention was made of M. de Vitri, who is very ill: upon which she said to MONSIEUR, "Ah! Sir, I saw him this morning, poor man! his face looked just like a *stratagem.*" What could she mean? Madame de Richelieu has received such kind and affectionate letters from the King, that she is more than repaid for what she has done [1]. Adieu, my dearest and best-beloved.

LETTER 311

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, July 10, 1675.

I assure you, my dear child, it has given me the greatest uneasiness, to find that you are under so much concern about my health: alas! my love, you think of nothing else, and your arguments are expressly calculated to make you uneasy. You say I made a mystery of the reason of my being bled, to you; but indeed I am not ill. I have had no vapours: I placed my bleeding more to the account of

[1] The singular attachment of the Queen and Madame de Montespan.

the business I had to go through, than to the score of my health: I felt a little oppressed. I judged that it was best for me to be bled before I set off, as a sort of security in my journey. The Cardinal, whom I used to visit daily, was gone; I saw five or six days of rest before me, and after that the affair of M. de Bellièvre. I wished to devote myself to it entirely, and to your little lawsuit; so I determined to be bled, to be quite at liberty. I did not send you these particulars, because it would have borne the construction of making myself appear of great consequence, and this discretion has given you a thousand pangs: I am grieved at this, my dear child: be assured, however, that I will never deceive you, but abide faithfully by the agreement we have made, not to spare each other on these occasions: I will always let you know how I am without disguise, so trust to me.

And now, my dear, I must acquaint you, that we have gained your little cause with Ventadour. The Princesses de Tingri were present at the entry of the judges, and so was I, and we have sent to return thanks. It is a pity that Molière is dead, for he would have made an excellent farce of what has happened at the Bellièvre Mansion. They have refused four hundred thousand francs for that charming house, which twenty merchants would have purchased, because it looks into four streets, and they might have built twenty good houses upon the ground it stands on; but they would not part with it on any terms, because forsooth it is the family house, and the shoes of the old Chancellor have touched the threshold, and they are used to the parish church of St.-Germain-l'Auxerrois; and so for this piece of antiquity, they let the house lie upon hand, and pay twenty thousand livres a year for their lodging.

Madame de Coulanges saw the Grand-Duchesse at Lyons, in the interval of her mother's fits: she says the Princess is very much changed, and will be eclipsed by Madame de Guise [1]; she says she had seen you at Pierrelate, and that she thought you extremely handsome: send

[1] Elisabeth d'Orléans, elder sister of the Grand-Duchesse.

me some particulars of her journey. You will be the means of my going to see her.

I am now going to answer yours of the third; let us talk a little of our good Cardinal. It was not true that the Pope had sent him a brief, when Madame de Vins wrote you word that he had: but it is confirmed now. It was Cardinal Spada who took upon him to assert that it would be so. The good Pope, my dear, has done neither better nor worse, than Trivelin [1] in the play, who wrote and delivered the answer to a letter before the letter was received. We are all heartily rejoiced at it, and d'Hacqueville thinks he will conform to His Holiness's will; that he will write to the Pope, and tell him the true reasons of his being desirous of laying down the purple, and that he is far from supposing it to be incompatible with his salvation; and that if His Holiness persists in commanding him to keep his hat, he will cheerfully acquiesce. So in all probability he will remain our good Cardinal still. He finds his solitude agree very well with him; he says so, at least, and we ought to believe him: he did not take a final leave of me; on the contrary, he gave me reason to believe I should see him again, and seemed to take a pleasure, not only in giving me that consolation, but himself likewise. He will retain his equipage, for he can no longer have the modesty of a penitent in this respect, as the Princesse d'Harcourt says. He writes me a little note now and then, which I preserve with the greatest care; he always mentions you: I would have you write to him on the subject of his hat, and advise him to keep it.

It is said that M. de St. Vallier has married Mademoiselle de Rouvroi; the affair of his disgrace was a mere trick. Little St. Valleri is out of danger, as to her life, but we cannot say so much with respect to her beauty. Our Coadjutor's good fortune continues as brilliant as ever, and I am of your opinion, that he has more reason to be pleased with his stay in Paris, than with the Archbishop of Paris.

You did extremely well in waiting on the Duchesse, it

[1] A character in the Italian comedy.

would have been cruel not to have done it. You are likewise very much in the right to remain at Grignan; it will hasten your husband's return thither: perhaps you will also have Madame de Coulanges, Vardes, and Corbinelli. Madame de Coulanges writes me word, that your *hatred* is very convenient, and that she has brought you into a very agreeable train of correspondence. Pray, my dear child, do not thank me for what I do for you and Mademoiselle de Méri; rather rejoice with me, that I have the satisfaction of being employed in anything that relates to your business or your pleasure.

LETTER 312

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, July 12, 1675.

We have the finest chase in the world, after M. de B*** and M. de M*** [1]. They set off, they squat, they run a length, they turn and wind, but we still keep scent of them; we have excellent noses; we are in full chase, and if once we catch them, as I hope we shall, we shall give them a good drubbing, and then, following the noble practice of good huntsmen, we will leave them there, and never touch them again. I will let you know the end of all this: I have no notion of giving up such an affair; but if I prevent you from being the greatest Captain in the world, the Abbé [2] prevents me from being the most active and busy in your affairs; he always gets the start of me, and that, added to his superior abilities, makes him beat more ground than I do. He is out by seven o'clock in the morning, consulting every word, point, and stop, in the

[1] It is believed that these initials stand for M. de Buous and M. de Marignanes.

[2] De Coulanges.

transaction. There are some few disputes indeed between Mademoiselle de Méri and him, now and then; and what do you think occasions them? Why, the great exactness of the Abbé, more than any consideration of interest: for if an affront is offered to arithmetic, or the inviolable rule, that two and two make four, is broken in upon, the poor Abbé is beside himself. It is his humour, and he should be indulged in it: on the other side, Mademoiselle de Méri is of a different humour: whenever she takes a part in a dispute, she never drops it, but pushes it to the very last; and when the Abbé finds himself overpowered by a torrent of words, he falls into a passion, and puts on the uncle, by commanding silence: but this, she says, is not polite. *Polite* is a new affront; everything is overturned; he will not hear a word more; the main argument is forgotten; and little accidental circumstances are made points of consequence: then I am forced to take the field, and run first to one and then to the other, like the cook in the play [1]; but I make rather a better ending, for I set them both laughing, and the conclusion of the matter is, that the next day Mademoiselle de Méri returns to our good Abbé to ask his advice again; and he as readily gives it, and busies himself to serve her. He has his humours, as I said before, and who among us is free from them? However, I will take upon me to assure you, that there shall never be anything serious in their disputes, so long as I am a party concerned.

Adieu, my dearest child. I have no news for you. Our Cardinal is extremely well; I would have you write to him, and desire him not to waste his time in fruitless replies and expostulations with the Court of Rome; but to obey with a good grace, and wear his old hat still, as our fat Abbé [2] says, who, by the by, complains sadly of your silence. M. de La Rochefoucauld sends you word that he is perfectly recovered from his gout, and imagines

[1] See the Fourth Scene of the First Act in Molière's *Miser*. (L'Avare).

[2] The Abbé de Pontcarré.

his poverty will return again; for he can find no joy in his riches, while tormented with that disorder.

LETTER 313

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, July 19, 1675.

Guess from whence I write to you, my dear: from M. de Pomponne's, as you will perceive by the few lines which Madame de Vins sends you with this. I have been with her, the Abbé Arnauld, and d'Hacqueville, to see the procession of St. Geneviève pass; we returned in very good time; we were back by two o'clock; there are many that will not return till night. Do you know, that this procession is considered a very fine sight? It is attended by all the Religious Orders, in their respective habits, the curates of the several parishes, and all the Canons of Notre-Dame, preceded by the Archbishop of Paris in his pontificals, and on foot, giving his benediction to the right and left, as he goes, till he comes to the cathedral; I should have said to the left only, for the Abbé de St. Geneviève marches on the right, barefoot, and preceded by a hundred and fifty monks, barefoot also; the cross and mitre are borne before him, like the Archbishop, and he gives his benedictions in the same manner, but with great apparent devotion, humility, and fasting, and an air of penitence, which show that he is to say mass at Notre-Dame. The Parliament in their red robes, and the principal companies, follow the shrine of the saint, which glitters with precious stones, and is carried by twenty men clad in white, and barefoot. The Provost of the merchants, and four Counsellors, are left as hostages at the church of St. Geneviève, for the return of this precious treasure. You will ask me, perhaps, why the shrine was exposed. It was to put a stop to the continual rains we have had, and to obtain warm and dry weather, which happened at the very time they were mak-

ing preparations for the procession; to which, as it was intended to obtain for us all kinds of blessings, I presume we owe His Majesty's return, who is expected here on Sunday next. In my letter of Wednesday, I will write you all that is worth writing.

M. de La Trousse is conducting a detachment of six thousand men to Maréchal de Créqui, who is to join M. de Turenne. La Fare and the others remain with the Dauphin's Gens-d'Armes, in the army commanded by the Prince. The other day MADAME, and Madame de Monaco, took d'Hacqueville, at the Gramont Mansion, to walk about the streets and the Tuileries incog.; as Her Highness is not much given to a disposition for gallantry, her dignity sits very easy on her. The Toscane Princess is expected every hour. This is another of the blessings obtained by the shrine of St. Geneviève. I saw one of your letters yesterday to the Abbé de Pontcarré; it is the best letter that ever was written: there is no part of it which has not some point, and wit; he has sent a copy of it to His Eminence; for the original is kept as sacred as the shrine.

Adieu, my dearest and best-beloved: you are so remarkable for your inviolable love of truth, that I do not abate myself a single expression of your kindness towards me; and you may judge then how happy it makes me.

LETTER 314

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, July 24, 1675.

The weather is so extremely hot to-day, my dear, that instead of tossing and tumbling in my bed, the whim took me to get up (though it is but five o'clock in the morning) and chat a little with you.

The King arrived at Versailles on Sunday morning; the Queen, Madame de Montespan, and all the other ladies, went to take possession of their former apartments.

In a short time after his arrival, His Majesty began to make the usual visits: the only difference is that they play in the State apartments. I shall have more intelligence before I conclude my letter. The reason of my being so ill informed of what passed at Versailles is, that I came but last night from M. de Pomponne's; Madame de Pomponne had invited d'Hacqueville and me in so pressing a manner, that there was no refusing. Indeed M. de Pomponne appeared delighted to see us: you were spoken of with all the friendship and esteem imaginable, during the short time we were there, and there was no want of conversation: one of our whims was, to wish we could see through a great many things which we think we understand, but which, in fact, we do not: we should then see into what passes in families, where we should find hatred, mistrust, anger, and contempt, in the room of all those fine things that are set to outward show, and pass upon the world for realities. I was wishing for a private sitting-room hung with mirrors of this kind instead of pictures. We carried this odd notion very far, and diverted ourselves extremely with it. We were for opening d'Hacqueville's head, to furnish ourselves from thence with some of these curious anecdotes; and pleased ourselves with thinking how the world is in general imposed upon by what they see and take for truth. You think that things are so and so in such a house; that such a couple adore each other; but stay awhile, and turn up the cards, and you will see that they hate each other most completely. You would imagine that such an event proceeded from such a cause; the little demon that drew aside the curtain, would undeceive you; and so through life. This afforded us infinite amusement. You see, my dear, I must have plenty of time to entertain you with such trifles: this is the consequence of rising so early in the morning: this is doing as M. de Marseilles does: if it had been winter, I should have visited by torch-light.

You have your cool north-east wind at last: Ah! my child, how uncomfortable it is; we are broiling with heat

in this country, and in Provence you are starving with cold. I am convinced that our shrine has effected this change; for before the procession, we discovered, like you, that the sun and the seasons had changed their course: I thought I had discovered too, like you, that this was the true reason that had occasioned the days we so much regret to fly so rapidly: for my part, my dear child, I experience as much sorrow to see these days past and gone for ever, as I formerly experienced joy in spending winter and summer, and every season, with you: this painful thought must give way to the hope of seeing you again.

I wait for cooler weather before I take physic, and for cooler Councils in Brittany [1] before I venture thither. Madame de Lavardin, Madame de La Troche, also M. d'Harouïs, and I, shall consult together about a proper time for our journey, having no design to run ourselves into the midst of the commotions that at present rend our poor Province: they seem to increase daily; and those concerned in them have got as far as Fougères, burning and ransacking all the way as they go along. This is rather too near *The Rocks*. They have begun a second time to plunder the *bureau* [2] at Rennes: Madame de Chaulnes is terrified almost to death, at the continual menaces she hears. I was told yesterday that some of the mutineers had actually stopped her in her coach, and that even the most moderate of them had sent notice to M. de Chaulnes, who is at Fort Louis, that if the troops he had sent for took a single step towards entering the Province, his wife would run the hazard of being torn to pieces by the insurgents. It is necessary, however, that some troops should march against them, for things are come to such a height, that lenitives are no longer of service: but, it would not be prudent for us to set out before the storm is

[1] The exorbitant taxes that had been imposed upon these unhappy people, had obliged numbers of them to have recourse to arms, in order to free themselves from the load of exactions that it was impossible for them to bear.

[2] A kind of Exchequer established in all the principal towns in France, for the collection of the King's revenues.

a little subsided, and we see the issue of this extreme confusion. It is hoped that the approaching harvest will help to disperse the rioters; for after all they must get in their grain, and there are nearly six or seven thousand of them, not one of whom can speak a word of French.

M. de Boucherat told me the other day, that a curate having received a clock that had been sent him from *France*, as they call this part of the country, in the sight of some of his parishioners, they immediately cried out in their language, that it was a new tax, they were sure of it, they saw it plainly. The good curate, with great presence of mind, and without seeming at all confused, said to them, "My children, you are mistaken, you know not what you are talking of; it is an *indulgence.*" This brought them all immediately upon their knees. You may, by this specimen, form a judgment of the understanding of these people. Let the consequence be what it may, I must wait till the hurricane is past; but I am sorry to be obliged to defer my journey: it was fixed at the most convenient time for me, and it cannot be put off without interfering with my plans. You know my resignation to Providence: we must always return to this at last, and take things as they come. I talk wisely, as you see, but I do not always think wisely. You well know there is one point in which I cannot practice what I preach.

Mademoiselle d'Eaubonne was married the day before yesterday. Your brother would willingly resign his ensigncy to be Colonel of the regiment of Champagne. It is a post that M. de Grignan has held; but we by no means wish him to make this addition to his expenses in these unsettled times; it would cost him at least fifteen or sixteen thousand francs. Many officers are returned with the King; the Grand-Master, Messieurs de Soubise, Termes, Brancas, La Garde, Villars, the Comte de Fiesque, and others: as for the latter, people are apt to say of him, *di cortesia piu che di guerra amico*[1]. He had not been a

[1] That he is rather fonder of the Court than the Camp. [Translation.]

month in the army. M. de Pomponne says that it was impossible to wish more heartily to come to an engagement than the King did, or to be more resolved to march at the head of the first ranks, when they imagined they were likely to have a battle at Limbourg. He gave us an excellent description of His Majesty's mode of life, with those about him, especially the Prince and the Duc. It is pleasant to hear these little details.

The cassolette has arrived, my child; it very much resembles an *indulgence*; it is heavier, and not so beautiful as we fancied it: it is an antique, and is called a cassolette, but it is very badly wrought; it may do at Grignan, but not at Paris: our good Cardinal has done by it as he does by his music, praised it without understanding it. You have only now to thank him for it sincerely, and not give him the mortification of thinking you are not charmed with his present; and you must consider it as he wishes you to do, a mere trifle, which it would be very uncivil to refuse. When I desired you to advise him to amuse himself by writing his own history, I did it in compliance with the wishes of his friends, who begged me to try my influence with him on this subject, and they all promised that they would support me with their united remonstrances; that he might see that all who loved him joined in the same sentiment [1]. I can assure you he seems to enjoy a very good state of health. Things are no longer with him as they were last winter; a proper *régime*, and plain fare, have perfectly restored him.

You are very right in what you say on the way in which this affair is spoken of here: I have only heard it reported, not having had the misfortune to meet any of the persons who reason so well.

Thank God I see none but those who consider this action as a very glorious one, and who love him as well as we do. His friends by no means wish him to confine him-

[1] It is to the entreaties of the friends of Cardinal de Retz, that the public is indebted for the Memoirs of his life, which were printed long after his death with considerable omissions.

self to St.-Mihel, but advise him to go sometimes to Commerci, and sometimes to St.-Denis.

The Grand-Duchesse and Madame de Sainte-Même have talked a great deal of your beauty. I should have seen the Princesse if it had not been for our excursion to Pomponne: everybody finds her as you represented her, overwhelmed with sorrow. Madame de Montmartre went to meet her at Fontainebleau: they are preparing her a frightful prison.

Madame de Montlouet has the small-pox: her daughter is in great alarm for her; and the mother is no less unhappy that she cannot prevail on her to quit her for an instant, to take a little air, as her physicians have advised her to do. I believe they are neither of them very brilliant in point of understanding, but, in respect to sentiments of tenderness and affection for each other, they are just like you and me. You express yourself so delightfully on the subject of your affection for me, that I dare not undertake to tell you how much I am affected by joy, tenderness, and gratitude: but you can easily comprehend it, since you think you know in what degree I love you: your cards turn up well for me. M. de Pomponne said the other day, after owning that there is no certain general rule, "It would seem as if Madame de Sévigné passionately loved Madame de Grignan; but, do you know the truth? Shall I tell you what the cards say? Why, they say, that she does love her passionately:" to which he might have added, to my eternal glory, "and is as passionately beloved by her."

I have your silks: I wish I could find a person to send them by, for they make too small a parcel for the coach, and too large a one for the post. I think I may say the same of this letter.

*LETTER 315

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE LA FAYETTE.

Paris, Tuesday, 24 —— [1].

You know, my dear, that we do not bathe every day; and during the three days that I did not throw myself into the water, I went to Livry, from whence I returned yesterday, intending to go back again when I shall have finished my dippings, and our Abbé settled some little affairs which still detain him here. On the eve of my departure for Livry, I went to see MADEMOISELLE, who caressed me exceedingly; I presented your compliments to her, and she received them very graciously, at least she did not appear to have anything upon her mind: I went with Mademoiselle de Rambouillet, Madame de Valençai, and Madame de Lavardin: she is now going to Court, and she is so pleased, that she will be in good humour with everyone the whole winter. I have no news to send you, for I have not seen the *Gazette* [2] these three days. You must have heard, however, that Madame de N. is dead, and that her lover, Trévigni, has been almost dead also with grief; for my part, I wish he had died, for the honour of the ladies. I have still eruptions on my face, my poor little dear, for which I am constantly using some remedy; I am in the hands of Bourdelot, who physics me with melons and ice, which everybody says will kill me. This idea renders me so irresolute, that though I find myself better for what he orders me, I take it with trembling. Adieu, my dearest; you well know that it is impossible to love you more tenderly than I do.

[1] This letter is without date; but a little attention showed, that it could not have been written later than the summer of 1675, when Madame de Sévigné was in her forty-ninth year.

[2] Madame de Lavardin, who was very fond of news, and went everywhere in quest of it.

LETTER 316

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, July 26, 1675.

I believe, my dear, I shall write you but a short letter to-day, because it is very late. I have just come from the opera, with M. and Madame de Pomponne, the Abbé Arnauld [1], Madame de Vins, Madame de La Troche, and d'Hacqueville. This was intended as an entertainment for the Abbé Arnauld [2], who has not seen any thing of the kind since Urbain VIII. when he was at Rome with M. d'Angers; he was very much pleased. I have compliments to make you from all the company, and especially M. de Pomponne: who begs you seriously to depend upon his friendship, notwithstanding your absence.

I saw the Grand-Duchesse yesterday: she exactly answered your description of her. I thought some traces of discontent were legible on her countenance: she had an air of reserve, and melancholy softened with tenderness; but I believe she will soon recover her gaiety and her beauty. She has succeeded very well at Versailles; the King thought her amiable, and will take care to make her spend her time there agreeably. Every one is eager to show the generosity of his sentiments by pitying and praising her. She was delighted with Versailles, and with the caresses of the noble family there; she has not yet seen the Dauphin nor MADEMOISELLE. As her reputation has never sustained the least blemish, it will be nothing more than charity to seek to amuse her. She talked to me much of you and of your beauty: I told her you still subsisted upon the air of Paris; she believes it, and says there is no

[1] Elder brother of M. de Pomponne.

[2] Henri Arnauld, uncle of M. de Pomponne, first known by the name of the Abbé St. Nicolas, and afterwards by that of Bishop of Angers: he was esteemed the most pious prelate in the church of France.

living in any other climate. I thought she would never have done talking of the bad supper she gave you[1]: she was very well pleased with M. de Grignan, and with Rippert, who took so much care of her when her coach was overturned. She thinks Madame de C*** the most silly, bold, coquettish, and impertinent woman she ever saw: and yet she has been told that the Grand-Duchesse admired her more than anyone in Provence: what vain-glory, and what a falsehood!

I have managed so well that Madame de Monaco is always ill; if she had health, she would be obliged to quit the party: her favour with MONSIEUR and MADAME is delightful. I fear Madame de Langeron is not very well pleased, and I have done all in my power that she shall not be. You understand and explain the *phantom* admirably; it is now used to express a *stratagem*. Our journey is delayed, as I told you: I shall go with M. d'Harouïs, we shall take our time. Brittany is more inflamed than ever. Madame de Chaulnes is not a prisoner, but one of her friends would be very glad that she were at Rennes, because she cannot stir out on account of the disorders that agitate the country.

The Court is again going to Fontainebleau; MADAME wishes it. It is certain that the friend of *Quantova* (Louis XIV.) has twice said to his wife and his curate, "Be assured I have not changed my former resolutions; trust to my word, and inform the curious of my sentiments."

Mademoiselle d'Armagnac is married to that Cadaval[2]: she is very handsome. The Chevalier de Lorraine is to perform the ceremony of espousing her; she is much to be pitied for going so far to have the nuptials consummated.

I shall send the music of the new opera to M. de Grignan very soon; if he be with you I embrace him, and de-

[1] At Pierrelate, a little village of Lower Dauphiné, where Madame de Grignan went to pay her respects to the Grand-Duchesse on her way through it.

[2] Nugno-Alvare Péréira de Mello, Duc de Cadaval, in Portugal.

sire him to take the utmost care of you. I do not know whether it was Cardinal de Retz who recommended me to take care of your interests; but I am never so well pleased as when I am doing something for you. His recommendation has a greater effect upon me than his benediction. Let me have an account of all your concerns; nothing is trifling, nothing is indifferent.

LETTER 317

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, July 31, 1675.

What you say of time is excellent. It is true, my child, we see no one stop short in his course because he cannot get through it: we spring from the dust, we return to dust, and time goes on without interruption. I am glad you will remain quietly at Grignan till the end of October. Aix would have appeared strange to you after leaving this place: the solitude and repose of Grignan tranquillises the mind, and you have great need of it. M. de Grignan is sufficient company for you, but your house will be full, and your music improved. I could not help laughing heartily at what you say of the Italian air, and how completely your musicians murder it notwithstanding your instructions: this part of your letter is admirable: I beg M. de Grignan to learn the whole of this air, for my sake, and we will sing it together.

I told you that our foolish Bretons put a stop to my journey for a while. The shrine of St. Geneviève has given us delightful weather. La St. Géran is on the road to heaven; the good La Villars has not received your letter, which is a great grief to her.

I must tell you an adventure that happened a few days ago: a poor lace-maker, in the Faubourg St. Mar-

ceau, was taxed ten crowns, in consequence of a new impost upon the trade-licences; he had not the money; the collectors pressed him for payment, he begged time, which they refused, and seized his bed, and what few things he had, not leaving him so much as a dish to eat out of; the poor wretch finding himself reduced to this condition, grew perfectly furious, and cut the throats of three of his children, who happened to be in the room with him; his wife fled with the fourth in her arms. He is confined in the Châtelet, and is to be hanged in a day or two: he says he regrets nothing, but the not having killed his wife and the other child which she saved. You may depend on it, my dear, that this is true, and that there has not been such an instance of fury since the siege of Jerusalem.

The Court was to have set out yesterday for Fontainebleau, where pleasures were to have been converted into toils by their multiplicity: everything was ready, when an unexpected blow terminated their joy: the people said it was on account of *Quantova*: attachment is always in extremes: enough is done to exasperate the curé and everyone else, and perhaps not enough for her; for in the midst of her outward triumph, she has inward sorrow.

You speak of the pleasures of Versailles; and at the time Fontainebleau was to be immersed in joy, M. de Turenne is killed, which has occasioned a general consternation. The Prince has posted away for Germany, and all France is in desolation. Instead of seeing an end to the campaign, and enjoying the pleasure of your brother's return, we are now more at a loss than ever. This is the world in its glory; these are events truly surprising; you are fond of such, but this I am sure will sensibly affect you. I am a fearful convert to M. Desbrosses' Doctrine of Predestination: for can we doubt an all-ruling, all-directing Providence, or that the cannon-ball which singled out M. de Turenne from ten or twelve persons who were round him, was loaded with his death from all eternity? I am going to give an account of this tragic event, in return for that of Toulon. Would to God they were alike!

By all means write to Cardinal de Retz, we have all of us written to him; he is very well, and leads a truly religious life: we have advised him to go to Commerci. He will be dreadfully shocked at the death of M. de Turenne. Write likewise to Cardinal de Bouillon, who is inconsolable.

Adieu, my dear child, you are too grateful by half: you make quite a sport of speaking ill of your mind: I think you must feel that a finer or more excellent one does not exist: you fear my affection will kill me, but I should be ashamed to add this wrong to my others: let me love you in my own way. You have written a charming letter to M. de Coulanges; I am delighted whenever I have the good fortune to see one of your letters. Everyone is looking for his friends, to talk of the death of M. de Turenne. The people gathered in crowds yesterday in the streets, weeping and bewailing the loss of this great man. Every other business but that of sorrow, seems wholly at a stand.

M. de Forbin [1] is to set out with six thousand men, to punish our poor Brittany, that is, in other words, to ruin it: they go by way of Nantes; for which reason Madame de Lavardin and I shall take the road of Mans. We are waiting for a favourable season to set out in. M. de Pomponne told M. de Forbin, that he had some lands in Brittany, naming at the same time those that belong to my son.

[1] Captain-Lieutenant of the first company of the King's Musketeers, and Lieutenant-General in His Majesty's armies.

LETTER 318

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Monsieur* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, July 31, 1675.

To you, my dear Comte, I now address myself, to acquaint you with one of the greatest misfortunes that could happen to France; it is the death of M. de Turenne, which I am persuaded will give you as much concern as it has given us. The news reached Versailles on Monday, and the King felt his loss as that of the greatest General, and the best man, in the world. The whole Court was in tears at the intelligence, and M. de Condom was near fainting. Everything was ready for setting out on a party of pleasure to Fontainebleau, but this immediately broke it off: never was there a man more sincerely, or more universally, regretted. All ranks and degrees were in the greatest consternation, and the streets were filled with people who gathered in crowds to lament the loss of their hero. I send you a faithful account of what passed a few days before his death: to a conduct, for the space of three months, which may be deemed almost miraculous, you have only to add the fatal day which at once terminated his glory and his life. He had the pleasure to see the enemy's army decamp and fly before him; and the 27th, which was Saturday, he ascended a little eminence, the better to observe their march: his intention was to attack their rear, and about noon he wrote a letter to the King, informing him of his design, and that he had sent orders to Brissac, to have the prayers of forty hours [1] said in the camp. He mentioned in his dispatch the death of young d'Hocquincourt, and added, that he would send a courier to acquaint His Majesty with the issue of his undertaking: he sealed his letter, and sent it away at two o'clock. He then went to the top of the hill, attended by eight or ten of the of-

[1] A form of prayer in the Roman Liturgy, so called.

ficers, when a ball fired at random by the enemy at a distance, unfortunately entered his body: I leave you to judge what were the cries and lamentations of his army. A courier was instantly dispatched hither, who arrived on Monday, as I told you, so that the King received M. de Turenne's letter, and that containing the news of his death, within an hour of each other. Some time after, one of M. de Turenne's gentlemen arrived, with the news that the armies were very near each other; that M. de Lorges commanded in his uncle's place, and that nothing could exceed the affliction of the army. The King immediately ordered the Duc to repair thither post, till the Prince could follow in person; whose ill health, and the fatiguing length of the journey, make it probable that bad consequences may happen before he can arrive. God grant he may return in safety. M. de Luxembourg remains in Flanders as Commander-in-Chief. The Lieutenants-General of the Prince are Messieurs de Duras and de La Feuillade. Maréchal de Créqui remains where he was.

The morning after this melancholy news, M. de Louvois proposed to His Majesty to repair the loss he had sustained in this gallant leader, by creating eight Generals in the place of one: this was certainly the way to lose nothing. At the same time he made eight new Maréchals of France, to wit, M. de Rochefort [1], to whom the others are indebted for their promotions, Messieurs de Luxembourg, Duras, La Feuillade, d'Estrades, Navailles, Schomberg, and Vivonne; eight in the whole. I leave you to make your own reflections on this part of my narrative. The Grand-Master [2] was in despair at being omitted; but they have made him a Duc: of what service, however, is that dignity to him? He has the honours of the Louvre already, in virtue of his place: he will not be admitted to the Parliament, on account of consequences; and his wife

[1] M. de Louvois, being desirous to make M. de Rochefort a Maréchal of France, could not compass it without proposing the other seven, who were older Lieutenants-General than M. de Rochefort.

[2] The Comte du Lude, Grand-Master of the Ordnance.

will accept of a tabouret no where but at Bouillé[1]; however, it is a favour; and, if he were a widower, he might perhaps marry some young rich widow. You know the Comte de Gramont hates Rochefort. I saw him yesterday; he was ready to burst with rage: he has written him a letter, and acquainted the King with it. The letter is as follows:

MONSEIGNEUR,

Favour can obtain as much as merit[2]; I shall therefore say no more.

Adieu, Rochefort.

The Comte DE GRAMONT.

I fancy you will see this compliment in the same light as we do.

I have seen an almanac, of Milan, I think, where in the month of July you read, "The sudden death of a great man;" and in the month of August, "Ah! what do I see?" We live in continual alarm here; but, however, the six thousand men are gone to ruin Brittany: two Provençals are charged with the commission; the Bailli de Forbin, and the Marquis de Vins. M. de Pomponne has recommended our poor lands to them. M. de Chaulnes and M. de Lavardin are in perfect despair: these are in the list of disagreeables. If ever you play the fool in your Province, I should never wish them to send Bretons to correct you. See how far my heart is from harbouring revenge.

This, my dear Comte, is all the news that is stirring: and in return for a delightful letter, I send you one which cannot fail of giving you the greatest sorrow: believe me, I am as much concerned as you can possibly be. We have passed a whole winter in hearing of the divine qualities of this hero! Never did man approach so near perfection.

[1] The Comtesse du Lude was remarkable for passing all her time in the country, through her extravagant fondness for the diversion of hunting.

[2] A verse in *The Cid.*

The more he was known, the more he was esteemed, and the more he will be regretted.

My dear children, I embrace you both cordially: I pity you, that you have nobody with whom you can talk of this great event. It is natural to be fond of communicating one's thoughts on such an occasion. If you are grieved, it is no more than we all are here.

LETTER 319

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, August 2, 1675.

I cannot help thinking, my dear, of the astonishment and grief you have felt at the death of M. de Turenne. Cardinal de Bouillon is inconsolable: he heard it from a gentleman of Louvigny's, who, willing to be the first to make his compliments of condolence on the occasion, stopped his coach, as he was coming from Pontoise to Versailles. The Cardinal did not know what to make of his discourse; and the gentleman, on his part, finding he knew nothing of the matter, made off as fast as he could. The Cardinal immediately dispatched one of his people after him and soon learned the fatal news, at which he fainted: he was carried back to Pontoise; where he has been these two days without eating a morsel, passing his whole time in tears and lamentations. Madame de Guénégaud and Cavoye have been to see him; who are no less afflicted than himself. I have just written him a note, which I think pretty good. I informed him of your grief upon the occasion, both from the interest you take in all that concerns him, and from your esteem and admiration for the deceased hero. Pray do not forget to write to him yourself, for I think you write particularly well on such subjects: in this case, indeed, you have nothing to do, but give a loose to your pen. Paris is in a general consterna-

tion of grief at this great loss. We wait in great anxiety for another courier from Germany. Montécuculli, who was retreating, is returned back; and, doubtless, hopes to profit not a little, by an event so favourable for him. It is said the troops uttered cries of grief that might have been heard at the distance of two leagues, when news was brought them of their General's death. No consideration could stop them: they insisted upon being led immediately to the fight; they were resolved to avenge the death of their father, their leader, their protector, and defender; while he was with them, they said, they feared no danger, and were determined to avenge his death: "So lead us on," they cried, "think not to stop us; we are bent for the fight." This I had from a gentleman who belonged to M. de Turenne, and was sent from the camp to His Majesty. He was bathed in tears while he related this, and all the time that he spoke of the circumstances of his master's death. The ball struck M. de Turenne directly across the body. You may easily imagine he fell from his horse, and expired; but he had just life enough left to crawl a step or two forward, and clinch his hands in the agonies of death; and then a cloak was thrown over the body. Boisguyot, which is the name of the person who gave us this account, never quitted him till he was carried, with as little noise as possible, to the nearest house. M. de Lorges was about a league distant from the place where the accident happened; judge what must be his feelings when he heard of it. His is the chief loss, who must take charge of this army, and be answerable for all events, till the arrival of the Prince, who cannot join him in less than three weeks. I think, twenty times a day, of the poor Chevalier de Grignan: he certainly will never be able to support this loss, without losing his reason. Indeed, everyone who knew and loved M. de Turenne, is greatly to be pitied.

The King said yesterday, in speaking of the eight new Maréchals that had been made, that, if Gadagne had had a little patience, he should have been of the number; but, as he thought fit to be out of patience and retire, it

was very well as it was. They say, the Comte d'Estrées is endeavouring to dispose of his post, being one of those who are disappointed at not having had a *bâton*. Guess what Coulanges is doing: he is copying word for word, and without being the least tired, all the news I have written you. I told you the Grand-Master was made a Duc: he dare not complain; he is to be a Maréchal of France the first opportunity; and the manner in which the King spoke to him, has done him infinitely more honour, than the dignity he has conferred on him. His Majesty ordered him to give Pomponne his name and qualifications: "Sire," replied he, "I will give him the patent conferred on my grandfather, and he will have nothing more to do, than to have that copied." We must congratulate him. M. de Grignan will have a great deal to do upon all these promotions; and it is not unlikely he may make himself some enemies: for our new dignitaries aspire to the title of Monseigneur; and will not be convinced of the injustice of their claim.

But, to return to M. de Turenne. When he took leave of Cardinal de Retz, he spoke to him thus: "Sir, I make no professions, it is not my way; but let me beg you seriously to believe me, when I tell you, that were it not for the present state of affairs, in which I may perhaps be wanted, I would follow your example: and I give you my word, that, if I live to return, I will think of my salvation in time; and, as you have done, set apart some few moments between life and death." I had this from d'Hacqueville not two days ago. The Cardinal will be very much affected at his death. It seems to me, my child, as if I could not tire you by talking of him: we agree that there are some things of which we cannot know too much. I embrace M. de Grignan: I wish you had some one with you to whom you could talk of M. de Turenne: the Villars adore you; Villars is returned, but St.-Géran and his head remain behind. His wife was in hopes that they would have had some pity on him and brought him back with the rest. I suppose La Garde has acquainted you with his

design of paying you a visit. I long to take my leave of him for that journey. Mine, as you know, is put off for some time. We must wait to see what effect the march of six thousand men, commanded by two Provençals, will produce in our country. It is very hard for M. de Lavardin, to have given four hundred thousand francs for his post, and to be obliged to command under M. de Forbin; for M. de Chaulnes still retains the shadow of First Commander. Madame de Lavardin and M. d'Harouïs are the compasses by which I steer my course. Be under no concern about me, my dear, nor my health: I shall take medicine after the full moon, and when I have had news from Germany. Adieu! my dearest child. I love you so passionately, that if any one was desirous of obtaining my affection, he might think himself well off if I loved him only as much as I do your portrait.

*LETTER 320

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

Paris, August 6, 1675.

I shall say no more of my daughter's departure, though it is a subject upon which I think incessantly. I shall never be able to reconcile myself to the idea of living without her: but I must keep this sorrow to myself. You ask me where I am, how I am, and in what way I amuse myself. I am in Paris. I am in good health, and I amuse myself with trifles. But this style is laconic; I will be more diffuse. I should now be in Brittany, where I have a thousand affairs to transact, if it were not for the commotions which disturb it. Six thousand men are going thither, commanded by M. de Forbin. The question is, what will be the effect of this chastisement. I wait to know, and if repentance seize the rebels, and they return to their duty, I shall resume the thread of my journey, and spend part of the winter there.

I have had many attacks of the vapours; and the health, which you have formerly seen so robust, has sustained shocks, that have humbled me as much as if I had received an insult.

With my mode of life you are sufficiently acquainted. I pass my time with five or six female friends whose society pleases me, and in the performance of a thousand necessary duties, which are no trivial concern. But what vexes me is, that the days pass away even when we do nothing, and that we grow old, and die. I find great fault with this. Life is too short: scarcely is our youth passed, before we find ourselves in old age. I could wish to have a hundred years certain, and to leave the rest to chance. Should you not like this too, my dear cousin? But how is it to be attained? My niece will be of my opinion. If she is happy in her marriage, she will inform us of it; if not, she will be silent upon the subject. Whatever be the event, there is no pleasure, no comfort, no happiness, that I do not wish her, in this change in her situation. I often talk upon the subject with my niece the nun: she is very agreeable, and her turn of mind often reminds me of you. I cannot pay her a higher compliment.

You are an excellent almanac: you predicted, like one of the trade, all that happened in Germany; but you did not foresee the death of M. de Turenne, nor the cannon-ball shot at random, which singled him out from ten or twelve others. I, who see the hand of Providence in everything, behold this cannon loaded from all eternity[1]. I observe that everything concurred to lead M. de Turenne to the fatal spot, and I do not consider the event so dreadful, supposing him to be in a fit condition to die. What more was necessary? He died in the arms of Glory. His reputation could not be greater: even at the moment of his death, he had the pleasure of seeing his enemies retire, and of witnessing the fruit of his conduct for three months. Long life will sometimes obscure the star of fame. It is

[1] It is pleasing to observe, that she felt the beauty of this expression, and made use of it to more than one of her friends.

always safest to cut to the quick, and especially with heroes whose actions are so scrutinised. If the Comte d'**** had died after the taking of **** [1] or the relief of **** [2], and the Maréchal du **** [3] after the battle of **** [4], would they not have been more renowned? M. de Turenne did not feel the pain of death: do you reckon that as nothing? You know the general grief occasioned by his loss, and the creation of eight new Maréchals of France in consequence of it.

Vaubrun was killed in the last action, which loaded M. de Lorges with glory: we must see the end of this. We shall be in continual alarm till we know whether our troops have recrossed the Rhine. Then, as the soldiers say, we shall be all confounded together, with only the river between us. Madame de Grignan is at her country-seat. What a fate is mine! Providence! Providence! Adieu, my dear Comte. My dear niece, adieu. I beg a thousand remembrances to M. and Madame de Toulongeon. I like the little Comtesse extremely. I was not at Montelon a quarter of an hour before we were as good friends as if we had known each other all our lives: it was because she has great quickness of understanding, and we had no time to lose. My son remains in Flanders: he will not go to Germany. I have thought of you a thousand times since all these events have taken place.

LETTER 321

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Wednesday, August 7, 1675.

Is it true, my dear, that I did not mention St.-Marcel, in my description of the procession of St.-Geneviève? I

[1] Henri de Lorraine, Comte d'Harcourt.

[2] Casal.

[3] Maréchal du Plessis-Praslin, who beat Turenne at Rethel.

[4] Rethel.

cannot imagine how I could be guilty of such an omission. St.-Marcel came to fetch St.-Geneviève as far as his own Chapel, otherwise the laws of decorum would not have permitted her to advance a step towards him. The shrine of this Saint was carried by the company of goldsmiths, who had ornamented it with an infinite variety of precious stones, valued at nearly two millions: it was the finest sight in the world. The Saint followed next, carried on the shoulders of her dutiful children barefoot, in all the pomp of devotion. When they returned from Notre-Dame, the gentleman Saint reconducted the lady Saint, to a place appointed, where they always separate: but can you imagine with what violence? The efforts they made to rejoin each other were so great, that the number of men to carry them was increased by ten on each side; and if by chance they had met, no human force could have separated them. If you do not believe this, you need only ask the good citizens of Paris, who were all witnesses of it. This however was prevented; so they only made a civil bow to each other, and retired each to their own habitation. I wonder what I could be thinking of, that I forgot to mention this miraculous story.

I have told you, that I am not going to Brittany. You will easily believe, that I shall not go till I have settled our correspondence with our new friend at the post-office: we shall hear from each other twice a week; it is my life everywhere, but at *The Rocks* I should certainly die if I had not this consolation. I shall carry with me books and work; but these amusements are not to be compared to the pleasure of our correspondence, which is my principal one.

Your letters respecting the army will be unintelligible till you know of the death of M. de Turenne. Every thing is in confusion: there is now no hope of any good from Flanders, or from Germany, or of your brother's arrival. We shall see in a few days how things will turn out, what train affairs will take in our Province, and how M. de Forbin will conduct his little army. I advise you to

write to our good Cardinal upon the loss we have sustained: he will be gratified by your attention: it was said the other day in a place of considerable consequence that they knew but two men who were superior to all the rest of mankind, the Cardinal and M. de Turenne; the Cardinal now stands alone on this eminence.

Your Madame de Schomberg is become the wife of a Maréchal [1]; it is very laudable of her to remain in Languedoc in order to be nearer Catalonia: perhaps her health makes her stay there necessary. It would be a pretty excursion for M. de Grignan, and La Garde, to pay her a visit at the waters. All this would perhaps make her husband change places.

The Chevalier de Buous is perfectly satisfied with me. I am his Ambassador at the house of M. de Pomponne. Guilleragues has performed wonders in his *Gazette* [2]; but I find his last praises somewhat confused. I should prefer a more natural and less studied style. My son tells me, he can easily comprehend the miserable condition of the army in Germany, by what his own suffers; but that they are happy however in being left under M. de Luxembourg, since the Prince is taken from them. Poor Madame de Vaubrun is in despair at the death of her husband [3]; M. d'Harouïs wept yesterday both for himself and for her. I saw Comte de Fiesque and some others the other day at mass, who certainly do not appear there with a good grace. I thought those mothers happy, whose sons were neither at the Minimes [4] nor in Germany; I mean myself,

[1] M. de Schomberg was one of the eight Maréchals who were created on the thirtieth of June preceding: he then commanded in Catalonia.

[2] She refers to an eulogium on M. de Turenne, which was inserted in the *Gazette de France* on the occasion of his death. Guilleragues had the management of the *Gazette,* which was then a new thing.

[3] The Marquis de Vaubrun had just been killed at the battle of Altenheim.

[4] That is, at mass at the Minimes of the Place-Royale, which Madame de Sévigné generally attended.

who have the satisfaction of knowing that my son is doing his duty, without being in danger at present.

The other day the Dauphin was shooting at a mark, and shot very wide of it: M. de Montausier rallied him upon it; and told the Marquis de Créqui, who is very skillful, to fire, saying to the Dauphin, "See how well he will hit the mark." The arch youth had the complaisance to shoot a foot further from it than the Dauphin, which turned the laugh on M. de Montausier: "Ah! little wretch," said he, "you deserve to be hanged." M. de Grignan must remember this young courtier well; he has told us similar anecdotes of him.

You ought to read the *Crusades*; you would there see an Aimar de Monteil, and a Castellane, for your choice[1]: they are both heroes. I want to read Tasso again, after having read that book. I have at last seen M. de Péruis: he seems delighted with you and M. de Grignan: I think him a very worthy man, mild in his manners and sincere. We chatted a full hour about Provence, on which subject I still find myself very learned. He is charmed with your portrait; I wish mine were a little less vulgar: it seems to me that it can neither be viewed with pleasure nor affection. The good d'Heudicourt is delighted with your letter: she can tell you some very good and very extraordinary things: her correspondence will be very entertaining to you. I made Péruis tell me where he found you, at what time, in what place: I recognised you in your bed, lazy creature! He says you are handsome, fair, and plump: I dare not question him further. I prefer the conversation of a man who comes from Grignan, and who talks of you, to that of every other person: I could scarcely leave him.

I shall scold Corbinelli for not writing to you: what

[1] Blanche Adhémar de Monteil espoused Gaspard de Castellane, in 1498. Their son, Gaspard de Castellane, was heir of Louis Adhémar de Monteil, Comte de Grignan, his uncle, who, dying without issue, entailed on him the name and arms of Adhémar; so that the Comtes de Grignan, who have since borne the name of Adhémar de Monteil, and which title is now extinct, were originally of the house of Castellane.

folly! what has he better to do? Alas! I have just heard that the poor fellow has been near death: he has had such violent headaches, accompanied with fever, as to render him delirious. He has signed his name at the bottom of a letter which he has had written to inform me that he is not dead, but that he has been in great danger, and that I have been on the point of losing the truest friend I have in the world: I had rather he had not justified himself so well with respect to you. Say something kind to him for my sake; I love him, and am convinced of his friendship for me.

I have been to Versailles, I am not certain whether I have before told you so; d'Hacqueville and I went there together: we set out at three o'clock, and went straight to M. de Louvois', whom we found at home. This seemed to me as lucky a circumstance as throwing into the treize at *trou-madame*. I spoke to him for my son; he cannot have the regiment, because the officer who has the command of it is not dead. This Minister said a thousand civil things to me; I told him how tired we were of the ensigncy; in short, all went well: we got into our carriage again, and were at Paris at nine o'clock. I have since been to Versailles with Madame de Verneuil, to pay, as it is called, her Court. M. de Condom is not yet reconciled to the death of M. de Turenne. Cardinal de Bouillon is so altered, I should scarcely have known him: he caught sight of me, and, fearing he should weep, turned away instantly: I did the same, for I was very much affected. The ladies who attend the Queen, are the companions of Madame de Montespan also. They play and sup together by turns, and have entertainments of music every evening. Nothing is concealed, or so much as pretended to be made a secret of; they are seen in triumph in the public walks together; and there is no appearance of discontent.

I have been to Clagny: how shall I express my admiration of it! It is the Enchanted Palace of Armida. The building advances so rapidly, that you may see it grow under your eye: the gardens are finished. You are

well acquainted with Le Nôtre's [1] manner of gardening. He has left the wood standing, which has an admirable effect, and has planted a grove of orange-trees in large tubs, and tall enough to supply a shade; it is divided into walks and alleys, bounded by palisades on each side, interwoven with roses, jessamine, tuberoses, and pinks. This flowery fence concealing the tubs in which the orange-trees are planted, makes them appear to grow out of the ground; and the appearance of a natural orange-grove in our climate, is the most beautiful, the most surprising, the most enchanting novelty that can be imagined: it is very much admired. I saw La Garde yesterday evening, who told me, that a person from the army had said very fine things to the King of the Chevalier de Grignan and his regiment: he is very well; God keep him so!

I must give you a peep behind the curtain, that will surprise you. The perfect friendship between *Quantova* (Madame de Montespan), and her travelling friend [2], has been converted, for these two years, into the most inveterate hatred. It is an acrimony, an antipathy, a contrariety like that of white and black. You ask, from whence it proceeds. From the friend's haughtiness, which makes her revolt against the orders of *Quantova*. She does not love to obey; she is willing to comply with the father, but not with the mother. It is to oblige him, that she undertakes this journey, and not in the least to gratify her; she gives an account of everything that passes to him, and not to her. He is scolded for having too much love for this proud woman; but it is thought it will not continue, unless the aversion ceases, or the success of this journey causes a revolution in the hearts of certain persons. This secret has been rolling, like an earthquake, under ground, these six months; it begins to take air, and will, I think, cause you some surprise. The friends of the female friend

[1] A famous gardener. It was he who laid out the gardens of the Tuileries and Versailles.

[2] Madame Scarron, who had taken the young Duc du Maine to Antwerp, to put him under the care of a quack, who sent him back worse than he went.

are much concerned at it, and it is thought that two of them have felt the ill effects of this misunderstanding. Do not you wonder how it happens that we reason sometimes without being able to comprehend the real state of things? I often say on those occasions, that a thread has been left out: we do not see clearly, till the curtain is removed, and it is then the most amusing thing in the world to observe our own mistakes. A great lady [1] could tell you, if she pleased, how soon, and how completely, the hero has been forgotten, in a certain house: it is quite scandalous. You know it is necessary to make use of ciphers.

I expect, with impatience, the letters of the Chevalier de Grignan; we want fresh advices every hour, for we shall always be in pain till our army has repassed the Rhine. I have sent you an account of the battle of M. de Lorges [2], who has shown himself worthy of his uncle. Heaven grant our successes may continue: I believe they are owing to the ghost of M. de Turenne, which still hovers about the army, and conducts it.

The Comte du Lude is here; he has been created a Duc. No one has ever thought of censuring his return; but there are some young men who appear at mass, who deserve to have their ears pulled. If we could have exchanged our standard for the regiment of Champagne, well and good; but Montgaillard is not dead, and he wants money; this is what M. de Louvois told me, adding, that I was too prudent a woman to purchase a regiment, when I could not get rid of the other post.

Madame de Saint Valleri will be marked. I have contrived that her pretty nose shall be spoiled: Madame de Monaco is still indisposed: how much you are obliged to me! I am like you; I pardon the mind in favour of the

[1] Apparently Madame d'Heudicourt. The *house* where Turenne was so completely forgotten is the Court. It is well known that he was hated by Louvois, and that the King appeared often embarrassed at the claims of the hero upon his gratitude.

[2] Gui-Aldonse Durfort, Comte de Lorges, afterwards Duc and Maréchal de France, was the son of Elisabeth de La Tour-de-Bouillon, sister of M. de Turenne.

sentiments. I must retract what I said of Madame de Langeron: she is more afflicted than ever: she is like the shadow of the Duchesse, but she never speaks a word; she neither hears nor answers: she weeps incessantly, and her eyes are so red, that it is scarcely possible to recognize her. The Duc is here for a day; he will rejoin the Prince, who marches slowly with four or five thousand men: he has taken this opportunity to see the King and the Duchesse. Madame de Langeron was dreadfully shocked at seeing him. I do not understand love as a profession, better than you do: this summer, it is nothing but the opera, where Mars and Venus agree so well together. These are the first acts of the opera; if you wish to know more, you must ask M. de Boissy, who will require no other reward than to be mentioned in this letter. I have received one from Corbinelli, who is recovered; he has been very ill: he is going to Grignan, at which I am very glad; you will talk of me, and be good companions. Adieu, my dearest, loveliest child. I believe you love me, and that I have nothing now to learn upon the subject of your affection, which is as sincere as my own.

I am now going to answer your letter of the last of July. Your correspondence, my dear, is excellent; our letters are conversations; I speak to you, and you answer me: I admire your attention and exactness; but I desire you, not to make it a law to yourself; for if it causes the least inconvenience to you, or the slightest headache, believe me, whatever is comfort to you, will be pleasure to me: for, without the smallest exaggeration, your interest, your pleasure, your health, hold the first rank amongst the things that are nearest to my heart.

I shall begin with my health: my dear, I desire you not to make yourself uneasy about it. I often see M. de Lorme at Madame de Montmort's, whom he is raising from the dead. He approves the remedies I have used, and advises me not to take medicine, judging that I am perfectly out of danger of a fresh attack of the vapours I had last year: the little remembrances I have had from

them, have been only their last adieu on taking leave of me: so trifling an attack proves the goodness of my constitution. He would have me take some powders before I go: but it will be more out of complaisance to him than any real occasion for them. If you had heard him give his opinion of me, you would have been relieved from all anxiety on my account for the remainder of your life and mine. I hope you will rest satisfied with his judgment, and no longer count this inquietude for my health among the effects of your tenderness for me; enough will remain besides.

As to the proposal of my going to Grignan instead of Brittany, the thought has occurred to me; and whenever I would amuse myself with pleasing reveries, the first thing that presents itself to me is your beautiful seat. The tour you propose to me is so pleasant, and so far practicable, that I shall carry the idea of it with me to Brittany, and often entertain myself with it in my woods; but for this year, the Abbé says it is out of the question: I have other business here besides the affair of Madame d'Acigné: I have the good Abbé, who will not be always with me; I have my son, who would be very much surprised to find me at Lambesc on his return; I should be very glad to see him married: be assured, however, that the desire and the hope of seeing you again, never quit me for a moment, and that they preserve my health, and the little happiness that still remains to me: we must therefore season our plans.

The sermon you preached to me on the evening before your departure, is still fresh in my memory; but as I cannot recall it to my thoughts, without fancying I see you entering my chamber, and I have no longer the joy or the hope of so pleasing an interview, it always costs me a tear; and whenever I retrace in my mind the whole of that evening, the remembrance is embittered with insupportable grief. All we did the last days we were together, all the places we frequented, all the sorrows I concealed beneath a cheerful countenance, for fear of renewing your exhortations, all this is still imprinted on my heart. I live over

all the time again; in such a month we were at Livry; every season restores some past scene to my deluded thoughts. My love for you is attended with a numerous train of uneasinesses; a continual absence joined with tenderness, ill coincides with quiet and tranquillity in a heart organised like mine. But I must pass over these thoughts without dwelling too much on them. You see the state of mind I am in; and I perceive, my dear, that you smile at me. But what say you to my letter? I love to be always conversing with you, and since it does not displease you, and gives me so much pleasure, what harm can there be in it? Adieu once more, my dear; believe me truly and solely yours.

LETTER 322

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, August 9, 1675.

As my note of Wednesday was so very short, I forgot many things I had to say to you. M. de Boucherat writes me word, that the Coadjutor did wonders at a conference held at St.-Germain on Monday night, upon the affairs of the clergy in his diocese. The Bishops of Condom and of Agen told me the same, when I was at Versailles. I am persuaded he will acquit himself as well in his speech to the King; so that he will always merit our praise.

Our poor friends have recrossed the Rhine very happily, after having beaten the enemy. This is very much to the honour of M. de Lorges. We all wish the King may send him a Maréchal's bâton, after an action so noble, so useful, and of which he alone has the merit. His horse was killed under him by a ball, which passed between his legs; so that it may be said that he was mounted on a cannon-ball. Providence, however, directed it, and many others. We lost in this action the Marquis de Montbrun, and perhaps M. de Montlaur, brother of the Prince d'Har-

court, your cousin-germain. The loss of the enemy was very great by their own confession: they had four thousand men killed. We lost but seven or eight hundred. The Duc de Sault, the Chevalier de Grignan, and the cavalry under their command, distinguished themselves. The English performed things almost incredible. In a word, we have been very fortunate. It is said that M. de Montécuculli, after having sent his compliments to M. de Lorges, and expressed his grief for the loss of so great a General, informed him, that he might recross the Rhine without molestation; that he would not expose his reputation to the rage of an army inflamed with grief for the loss of their beloved General, and to the valour of young Frenchmen, which nothing could resist in their first impetuosity. In reality, the engagement was not general; and only the troops which attacked us were defeated. Many courtiers, whom I dare not, in prudence, name, have signalised themselves in mentioning M. de Lorges to the King, and in stating the reasons which ought to make him immediately a Maréchal of France, but without effect. He has only the government of Alsace, and a pension of twenty-five thousand livres, which Vaubrun had. Ah! this is not what he wanted. The Comte d'Auvergne [1] has the position of Colonel-General of the Cavalry, and the government of Limousin. Cardinal de Bouillon is very much grieved.

Our good Cardinal has written again to the Pope, telling him, that he cannot but hope, that when His Holiness had seen the reasons that influence him, he would yield to his most humble prayers to receive his resignation: but we believe that the Pope, who is infallible, and who does nothing in vain, will not so much as read his letter, having written his answer beforehand, like our little friend whom you know.

Let us talk a little of M. de Turenne; it is long since we mentioned him. Do you not wonder that we think ourselves happy in having recrossed the Rhine, and that what we should have been grieved at, if he had been living,

[1] He was a nephew of M. de Turenne.

seems a happiness now he is no more? See what the loss of one man will effect.

Let me call your attention to something that appears to me extremely noble: I can fancy myself to be reading the Roman History. St. Hilaire, Lieutenant-General of the Artillery, stopped M. de Turenne, who was going another way, to show him a battery: it was just as if he had said, "Pray, Sir, stop a little, it is here you are to be killed." A ball took off the arm of St. Hilaire, who was pointing to the battery, and killed M. de Turenne. The son of St. Hilaire [1] threw himself upon his father, weeping and lamenting. "Hold your peace, my son," said he: "see," pointing to M. de Turenne who lay dead, "see here a loss that must be wept eternally; a loss that is irreparable." Without paying the least attention to himself, he was wholly taken up in lamenting this great man. The nobleness of the sentiment drew tears of admiration from M. de La Rochefoucauld.

M. de Turenne's gentleman, who has returned again from the army, says that the Chevalier de Grignan has performed the most heroic actions; that he returned five times to the charge; that his cavalry forced the enemy to retreat, and that his uncommon vigour decided the fate of the battle. M. de Boufflers also acted nobly, as did the Duc de Sault, and particularly M. de Lorges, who proved himself the nephew of a hero. I return to the Chevalier de Grignan, and cannot help wondering that he has not been wounded, in pushing forward so much as he has done into the very heart of the enemy. M. de Turenne had clothed at his own expense an English regiment, and there were only nine hundred francs found in his coffer. His body is carried to Turenne: many of his people, and even of his friends, have followed it. The Duc de Bouillon has returned; the Chevalier de Coislin because he is ill; but the Chevalier de Vendôme, on the very eve of the battle: everyone exclaims at this, and even the beauty of Madame

[1] Afterwards Lieutenant-General of the Artillery, and of the King's army, in place of his father.

de Ludres [1] does not excuse him. The Duc de Villeroi is inconsolable at the death of M. de Turenne. He writes that it is not in the power of fortune to do him any further harm, after having deprived him of the pleasure of being loved and esteemed by such a man.

*LETTER 323

From the Comte DE BUSSY *to Madame* DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, August 11, 1675.

I received your letter yesterday, which, long as it is, I assure you, my dear Madame, I thought too short. Whether your style be, as you say, laconic, or whether it be diffuse, your letters, in my opinion, contain charms that are no where else to be found; and it cannot be said, that it is my friendship for you that embellishes them, since persons of discernment, who are not acquainted with you, have admired them equally. This is praise enough for the present. Eulogiums ought not to be like your letters: to be good, they cannot be too short. You will pass, you say, the winter in Brittany: that is very kind to Madame de Grignan. It is plain that, in her absence, all countries are alike to you. I pity you for being subject to the vapours. It is a disagreeable, rather than a dangerous disorder, but it is still to be dreaded. It is sorrow that gives birth to it, and fear that nourishes and increases it. It would be much less, if we did not fancy it would kill us. We must not, therefore, believe this, for in reality it has not the power. I agree with you, that life is too short: a hundred years certain would be a reasonable time. You ask me what we should do to attain this period. After mature reflection, these are all the means I can discover, not indeed to preserve life with any degree of certainty,

[1] Chanoinesse de Poussai. It appears that this lady was afterwards beloved by the King.

but, apparently, to prolong it: To sleep little, to eat little, and to have no fear of death [1]; to be grave sometimes, and sometimes gay; for if we were always employed in pleasure, life would be too short, and if we were always sad, we should soon die of grief. Mademoiselle de Bussy is of my opinion, and intends to follow this regimen. Though her husband should not be everything she could wish, she is determined not to die a day the sooner. She will, in that case, she says, endeavour to outlive him.

LETTER 324

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, August 12, 1675.

I send you the most charming and the best account we have yet had of the death of M. de Turenne: it is from the young Marquis de Feuquières to Madame de Vins, and was written for M. de Pomponne. This Minister tells me it is a better account than the King received: it is true, that this little Feuquières [2] has a spice of Arnauld in his head, which makes him write better than any of the other courtiers.

I am just returned from a visit to Cardinal de Bouillon. He is so altered, you would hardly know him: he asked much after you, and does not in the least doubt your feeling upon the occasion. He told me several affecting anecdotes of M. de Turenne. This great man was certainly very fit to die: for his life had been a continued scene of innocence and integrity. He asked the Cardinal at Whitsuntide, whether he might not communicate without previous confession. His nephew answered him in the negative; because he could not be assured that he had com-

[1] See LUCRETIUS *On the Folly of the Fear of Death,* published in the "PRECIOUS TOMES" Series, (H. S. Nichols, New York).

[2] Antoine de Pas, Marquis de Feuquières, author of the *Mémoires sur la Guerre.* He was the grandson of Anne Arnauld, the aunt of M. Arnauld d'Andilly.

mitted no offence against God since Easter: M. de Turenne then informed him of his position; he was a thousand leagues distant from the commission of any mortal sin. However he went to confession, in compliance with custom: "But," says he, "must I confess to Recolet, as to M. de St. Gervais? Is it the same thing?" In truth, his was a soul worthy of heaven: it was too nearly allied to God, and had preserved itself too incorruptly, not to return to him immediately. He was extremely fond of M. d'Elbeuf's son [1], who is a little miracle of valour, at fourteen years of age. He sent him last year to pay his respects to M. de Lorraine, who said to him, "My little cousin, you are too happy in being able to see and hear M. de Turenne every day: you have no father, no friend, no relation, but this great man: kiss his footsteps as he passes, and think it a happiness to die at his feet." The poor child is almost dead with grief; but grief of reason more than of childishness, which it is feared may prove fatal to him. The Comte d'Auvergne has taken him with him; for he has nothing to expect from his father. Cavoye is afflicted by *formes*. The Duc de Villeroi has written home letters, in the excess of his grief, expressed in such strong terms, as make it necessary to conceal them. He acknowledges no fortune, no favour, superior to that of having been beloved by this hero; and declares, that he now holds in contempt the esteem and favour of every human being, let what will come of it. M. de Marsillac has signalised himself with respect to M. de Lorges, by declaring, that he merited a much greater reward than the spoils of M. de Vaubrun. Certainly nothing could have been more edifying, nothing more encouraging, as an example, than to have sent him a Maréchal's bâton, in return for such great success.

Madame de Coulanges sends me word how easily you will be comforted if she spend the winter at Lyons, and how glad she is that you are at your seat. I inform her in general of the commissions you send me, which proceed

[1] Henri de Lorraine, Duc d'Elbeuf, son of Charles de Lorraine and Elisabeth de La Tour de Bouillon, M. de Turenne's niece.

from the same kind intention; sometimes to prevent the one from receiving consolation, and sometimes that the other may be marked with the small-pox and be ill; in short, I tell her what pains I take to execute your commissions. She writes us admirable letters, and often speaks of the delightful *hatred* that subsists between you [1].

The Chevalier de Lorraine has retired to an Abbey he has in Picardy: Madame de Monaco met him at Chilly; but could not dissuade him from going. He is thought to be a little out in his politics: and it is imagined that he will find himself caught. It is somewhat extraordinary to desire a principal officer to be dismissed, whose conduct has given satisfaction [2]; and yet he sets his return at no less a price. He might perhaps have been indulged some years ago; but the times are altered: we are not fickle for having changed once. It is not true that the Marquis d'Effiat and Volonne have resigned, but as they accompanied the Chevalier to Chilly, it is probable they will feel disgust while this disgrace lasts. La Garde will have told you what M. de Louvois said to the good Langlée; and how well pleased His Majesty is with the conduct of the Chevalier de Grignan. If there is any happiness for a man in this life, he must certainly enjoy it, in the glory he has acquired on this occasion; not a relation, nor even an indifferent person, mentions him but in terms of the highest encomium: had it not been for his breast-plate, he had been a dead man. He received a number of blows upon that blessed cuirass: he never wore one before. Providence! Providence!

When the news came of the death of M. de Turenne, a servant of the Archbishop of Rheims awoke him, at five o'clock in the morning, to acquaint him with it: he asked if the army was defeated; he told him, no: upon which he reproved his *valet-de-chambre* for waking him [3], called him

[1] All this is only joking!

[2] By this officer is meant Monsieur, whom the Chevalier de Lorraine governed as a master, or rather as a mistress.

[3] This indifference in the brother of M. de Louvois cannot be considered as at all wonderful.

rascal, drew his curtains again, and resumed his nap. Farewell! child. What can I say after this?

I send you this account at five o'clock in the evening; I make up my packet alone. M. de Coulanges has been here, and would copy it. I hate that beyond measure. I have remembered you to M. de Pomponne, and Madame de Vins, who are pleased that you think of them. I told the former how delighted you were that you had nothing to do with the foolish quarrels of Provence; he laughed, and I mentioned the reasons of your wisdom: he wished the Bretons would amuse themselves in quarrelling instead of revolting. I saw Madame de Rouillé at her own house; I always thought her agreeable; I thought I was at Aix. I should like her daughter [1] extremely, but she has higher views. Madame de Verneuil, and Madame la Maréchale de Castelnau, have just been admiring your portrait; they like it extremely, but it is not so handsome as you.

LETTER 325

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Versailles, Tuesday, August 13, at midnight, 1675.

This is the news of the day. The King has just said that the Duc de Zell having besieged Tréves, and the Maréchal de Créqui being on the march towards him, the Duc had raised the siege, set fire to his own camp, passed the river on three bridges, charged the Maréchal on the flank, routed him, and taken all his cannon and baggage, that the infantry are cut to pieces, and the cavalry in a deplorable condition; and that it was not known what had become of the Maréchal de Créqui. It is imagined, that the enemy has again returned before Tréves, which is now without a Governor; for M. de Vignori, going to visit a battery, was thrown by his

[1] No doubt, for M. de Sévigné.

horse into the ditch, and killed on the spot [1]: poor La Mark and the Chevalier de Calvisson are killed. To-morrow we shall know the rest. All this came from the King's mouth; so that I think there is no room to doubt of its having been a complete defeat.

Wednesday, August 14.

I have been running about all the morning, to pick up some news about La Trousse and de Sanzei: not a word is said of the latter. Some say, that La Trousse is wounded; and others again, that it is not known where he is: but it appears pretty certain that he is not dead, because we know the names of so many of inferior rank who fell. The consternation is very great. There is nothing now to hinder this victorious army from joining Montécuculli, who has crossed the Rhine at Strasbourg [2]; which has received the German troops, notwithstanding its neutrality. It is imagined, that the bad state of the Prince's health will not permit him to be at the head of our army. What an unlucky circumstance for his reputation! Duras has at present the sole command: when he wrote to the King, to return him thanks for his promotion, he begged leave to observe to His Majesty, that he was much less deserving of the honour of being Maréchal of France, than his brother M. de Lorges. The enemy are very proud of the death of M. de Turenne: see the effects of this event! Their courage is restored: I scarcely dare write it, but the consternation here is very general; this is the second time I have told you of it. Mademoiselle de Méri is in great trouble about her brother: it would be very extraordinary if La Trousse should have escaped,

[1] It was said, that M. de Vignori, the Governor of Tréves, had received orders to make a sally from the town with the greater part of his garrison, and to join Maréchal de Créqui during the heat of the fight; but that not having had the precaution to communicate this to the officer next in command under him in the town, his sudden death entirely frustrated all the Maréchal's measures.

[2] This town was then governed in the nature of a Republic, and did not become subject to the dominion of France till after the 30th of September, 1681.

in the position he was in. We have no positive list of the killed yet: but the number is certainly great, by those we already hear of. The position of poor Madame de Créqui and Madame de La Trousse is dreadful; for they neither of them know what has become of their husbands.

LETTER 326

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, August 16, 1675.

I could wish all you write to me of M. de Turenne inserted in a funeral oration. There is an uncommon beauty and energy in your style; it has all the force of eloquence that can be inspired by grief. Think not, my child, that the remembrance of him can be lost in this country: the torrent that sweeps everything away, cannot remove a memory so well established: it is consecrated to immortality. I was the other day at M. de La Rochefoucauld's, with Madame de Lavardin, M. de Marsillac, and Madame de La Fayette. The Premier joined us. The conversation, which lasted two hours, turned wholly on the divine qualities of this true hero: the eyes of everyone were bathed in tears; and you cannot imagine how deeply the grief of his loss is engraved on all their hearts. You have exceeded us in nothing, but in the satisfaction of sighing aloud, and of writing his panegyric. We remarked one thing, which was, that it is not at his death only, that the largeness of his heart, the extent of his knowledge, the elevation of his mind, are admired; all this the world acknowledged during his life. How much this admiration is increased by his death, you may easily suppose. In a word, my dear, do not think that the death of this great man is regarded here like that of others. You may talk of it as much as you please; but do not suppose your grief can exceed ours. That none of the devotees have yet taken it into their heads to doubt whether his soul were in a good state,

proceeds from the perfect esteem every person felt for him; it is not possible to comprehend that sin or guilt could find a place in his heart; his conversion [1], so sincere, appeared to us like a baptism. Everyone speaks of the innocence of his manners, the purity of his intentions, his unaffected humility, the solid glory that filled his heart, without haughtiness or ostentation, his love of virtue for its own sake, without regarding the approbation of men, and, to crown all, his generous and Christian charity. Did not I tell you of the regiment he clothed? It cost him fourteen thousand francs; and left him almost without money. The English told M. de Lorges, that they would continue to serve this campaign to avenge his death; but that they would afterwards retire, not being able to serve under any other General after M. de Turenne. When some of the new troops grew a little impatient in the morasses, where they were up to the knees in water, the old soldiers animated them thus: "What! do you complain? It is plain you do not yet know M. de Turenne: he is more grieved than we are, when we are in any difficulty; he thinks of nothing at this moment but of removing us hence; he wakes, while we sleep; he is a father to us; it is easy to see that you are but young soldiers." It was thus they encouraged them. All I tell you is true; I do not load you with idle stories to amuse you because you are at a distance; this would be cheating you, and you may rely upon what I write to you as firmly, as on what I should tell you, if you were here. I return to the state of his soul. It is really remarkable that no zealot has yet thought fit to doubt, whether it has pleased God to receive it with open arms, as one of the best and noblest he ever created: reflect a little upon this general assurance of his salvation, and you will find it is a sort of miracle scarcely known but in his case.

The King has said of a certain person whose absence last winter delighted you, that he had neither head nor heart; these were his very words. Madame de Rohan, with

[1] He was originally a Protestant.

a handful of men, dispersed and put to flight the mutineers, who were formed in troops in the Duchy of Rohan. Our troops are at Nantes, commanded by Forbin; for de Vins is still a subaltern. Forbin's orders are to obey M. de Chaulnes: but as M. de Chaulnes is at Fort-Louis, Forbin in effect has the command. You understand what these imaginary honours are, which remain without action in those who have the name of Commanders. M. de Lavardin wished much to have this command: he has been at the head of an old regiment, and pretends it was an honour due to him; but his claim was not admitted. It is said, that our mutineers have sued for pardon: I suppose they will obtain it, after a sufficient number have been hanged. M. de Chamillard, who was odious to the Province, has been removed; and M. de Marillac, who is a worthy man, is made Controller. These disorders no longer prevent me from taking my journey; but there is something here I am unwilling to leave: I have not yet been able to go to Livry, however my inclination may tempt me; time must be taken as it comes; we wish to be in the centre of news, in these critical times.

Let me add a word more concerning M. de Turenne. He had made an acquaintance with a shepherd, who knew the roads and the country well; he used to take him along with him, and order his troops to be posted according to his direction. He had a great affection for this shepherd, and esteemed him as a man of good plain sense. He said that Colonel Bec owed his rise to a similar quality; and that he believed this shepherd would make his fortune as he had done. He was pleased with having contrived to make his troops pass without danger; and said to M. de Roye, "In good earnest this seems to me no ill performance, and I believe M. de Montécuculli will not find it so." It is indeed esteemed a masterpiece of military skill. Madame de Villars has seen another account since the day of battle, in which it is said that the Chevalier de Grignan performed wonders, both in respect of valour and prudence: God preserve him! for the courage of M. de Tu-

renne seems gone over to the enemy, and they think nothing impossible, since the defeat of Maréchal de Créqui.

M. de La Feuillade went post to Versailles the other day, where he surprised the King, and said to him, "Sire, some" (meaning Rochefort) "send for their wives, and some come to see them: I am come only to see your Majesty, and to thank you a thousand and a thousand times. I shall see nobody besides your Majesty, for it is to you I owe everything." He talked a long while with the King, and then taking his leave, said, "Sire, I am going; I beg you to make my compliments to the Queen and the Dauphin, and to my wife and children." And he mounted his horse; and in reality, saw no other person. This little sally pleased the King much; he told the Court, laughing, how he had been made the bearer of M. de La Feuillade's compliments. It is a great thing to be happy; everything then succeeds; nothing is taken amiss.

LETTER 327

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday evening, August 16, 1675.

At length, my dear, M. de La Trousse is found. I admire his good fortune in this affair: after having performed wonders at the head of his battalion, he was surrounded by two squadrons of the enemy's horse, so completely, that no one knew how it would end; when on a sudden he finds himself prisoner to —— Whom? The Marquis de Grana, with whom he was intimate for six months at Cologne, and with whom he had cultivated a close friendship. You may judge how he will be treated: he has a pretty little wound, which will furnish him with an excellent plea for passing the vintage at La Trousse: for there is no reason to doubt that he will be released on his parole; and, what is still better, will meet with the most favourable reception at Court. Nothing can exceed

the congratulations and compliments that have been made him by all his friends on this occasion. I really pity him for having so many thanks to return: if he were to have carved his own fortune, could he have done it more completely to his wish? As for honest Sanzei, we have no news of him, which does not look well. Maréchal de Créqui is at Tréves, at least it is so reported, and that his people saw him cross the river, with three others, in a miserable little boat. His wife is distracted with grief, not having heard a syllable from himself: for my part I really think he has been drowned, or else killed by the peasants on his way to Tréves. In short, matters appear to me to go badly on all sides, La Trousse excepted.

The Prince is on his journey towards Germany. The Duc is already there. M. de La Feuillade is gone to assemble the scattered remains of the Maréchal's army, in order to join the Prince. We should not make almanacs: but if the enemy should have taken Haguenau, as it is reported, the map will inform us that is not so well. If you complain of want of news, you are really very difficult to please: it is my opinion that you will not be in want of extraordinary events for some time. We are told here that the troops at Messina are quietly reimbarked, and returning to Provence.

The Coadjutor had composed his speech in the customary style of a panegyric: but now it would be rather unseasonable; so he has passed over the present situation of affairs with admirable skill and address: he will inform you of the turn he has given to our late unhappy affair; and provided this be well ingrafted, it will make one of the finest and most elegant parts in his speech.

What says the Comte to all this news? It is he I congratulate on the glorious behaviour of the Chevalier. St. Hérem lost two nephews in a week. The eldest had the command of the regiment of cavalry: I had some thoughts of asking it for your brother, but Madame de Montrevel applied for it, with as much earnestness as she did for a husband, and how was it possible to refuse

her? They say La Mark is not dead: I am sorry for his wife, and perhaps for his mistress.

LETTER 328

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, August 19, 1675.

I begin this letter, but shall not finish it till I have told you a great many things. I am thinking which I shall choose first.

I must relate some excellent things that have been said by the King, and which it will gratify you to hear. He was sensible of the loss he had sustained in M. de Turenne: he was for some time thoughtful, and could not but attribute our last misfortune [1] to the being deprived of that experienced General. One of the courtiers wishing to make him believe that our loss had been trifling, he replied, that he hated such dissimulation, for the defeat was the completest imaginable. He told those who seemed inclined to excuse Maréchal de Créqui, that he acknowledged him to be a brave man; "but what vexes me," added the King, "is, that my troops have been so shamefully beaten by persons who know nothing but how to play at basset: certainly the Duc de Zell is but a young player; this, however, is a tolerable specimen of his skill." Another courtier asking, what business the Maréchal had to begin the attack; the King replied, by repeating a story which he remembered of the Duc de Weimar [2], and which was extremely applicable to the occasion. This Duc de Weimar happening to be in France, an old man of the name of Parabère [3], and one of the Knights of the cordon-bleu, said to him, speaking of an engagement that had terminated in a similar manner, "But why, Sir, did you give

[1] See Letter 325, of the 13th August, 1675, in this volume.

[2] One of the greatest Generals of Louis XIII.

[3] Henri de Baudean, Comte de Parabère.

battle?"—"Because, Sir," said the Duc, "I thought to have gained a victory:" and then turning upon his heel, he asked the standers-by, "Who is that blue-ribbon fool?" The application of this story must have been highly amusing. M. de Lorraine was very unwilling to obey the young Duc de Zell, who is brother to the Duc de Hanover; but the Duc de Zell, who had all his troops there, wished to command them himself: and everything succeeded to his wish. Nothing has been heard of Maréchal de Créqui since he was seen in the little boat: for my part, I believe him dead. The Chevalier de Lorraine is no longer thought of: he is at his Abbey: this is no time for trifling news. I have sent all your letters. I shall speak to M. de Pomponne about the *Monseigneur*. In the meantime, I fancy M. de Vivonne has his passport without any further consequences; and as it is certain that you ought not on any account to disoblige him, I would, in your place, write him a note, and slip in a *Monseigneur* in honour of his family; as to the others, we will dispute it with them a little, such as Beuvron and Lavardin, who make their wives, aunts, and mothers, write to them in that style. I know this to be a fact, and that they are for delaying the decision [1]. It is imagined that d'Ambres will be worsted in his dispute with Maréchal d'Albret, and that the rule will be made general. The King, however, is to decide the business in a few days.

Monday Night.

I have had an hour's conversation with M. de Pomponne and Madame de Vins: and after having gone over several subjects, amongst which Provence had its share, I mentioned the *Monseigneur*. "Ah, for God's sake, Madame," said M. de Pomponne to me, "let M. de Grignan keep clear of *Monsieur,* or he will make his court badly. The King has explained himself in the affair of the Marquis d'Ambres, who must knuckle. Maréchal de

[1] There was a dispute at that time, whether a Maréchal of France had a right to be styled Monseigneur in writing to him.

Gramont says, in his way, that the Comte de Guiche was not a mean fellow, without birth or dignity, and that he never boggled at giving the title of *Monseigneur* to any Maréchal of France; therefore, I beg that M. de Grignan will follow my advice in this matter." These were his very words; I write them as they came from his lips; so I would not have you hesitate with M. de Vivonne: you may avoid writing to the others; but if you do write to them, as Maréchal de Gramont says, you must not *boggle*. It is now four days since the King explained himself upon the subject, and the partisans of Maréchal de Gramont support it with all their might. Madame de Vins desired me to give you the fullest assurances of her esteem, and to tell you it is not every one on whom she bestows it. Mesdames de Villars and de St. Géran came in a little after we had done talking: the latter has spoken to the King, and requested that the government, which was the late Vaubrun's, might be conferred on her husband. She trembled so very much at first, that she could scarcely utter a word; but when she had recovered herself, no one could speak better; but, after all, I think she will not succeed.

Nothing could have been more elegant or better-delivered than the Coadjutor's speech: he touched upon the late disaster with a grace and delicacy that surprised every one; the courtiers were particularly struck; a variation of phrase is so novel, that he gladly embraced the opportunity Voiture wished for in his letters to the Prince, and made as good a use of it as Voiture himself could have done. The King praised him highly; and said to the Dauphin, "What would you give to speak as well as the Coadjutor?"—"Sire," replied M. de Montausier, "this is not our business: it is enough for us, if we know how to answer."

I have to thank the Grignans for all the honour they do me, and the compliments I have lately received from Germany and Versailles; I wish the elder Grignan had some favour at Court, that I might have compliments also from Provence. M. de La Trousse has written to his wife: he is prisoner of his good friend the Marquis de Grana,

by whom he is treated with the utmost politeness. He is perfectly recovered from his wound, and is in good health: never, surely, was man so fortunate! it looks as if the whole action was brought about purely to heighten his glory. He writes word, that M. de Sanzei is certainly killed, and I think it must be so; for, besides that there is not the least account of him, he was the man most likely to sacrifice himself when he saw his regiment behave ill. However, we shall soon have certain intelligence.

I am not yet determined about my departure; it depends on a conference that is to be held at M. de l'Hommeau's, where we shall reason upon the state of affairs. The hero's body is not carried to Turenne, as I was told, but to St. Denis, where it is to be laid at the foot of the tomb of the Bourbons. A chapel is intended to be erected for the bodies, which are to be taken out of the hole in which they now are, and M. de Turenne's will be the first that will be placed in it. There are already four great Captains at their master's feet; but were there not, methinks he has a right to be first. In all the places through which this illustrious corpse passes, nothing is to be heard but cries and lamentations, people crowding to touch the bier, and processions to meet or follow it without number; so that those who have the charge of it are obliged to proceed by night. If it comes through Paris, it will occasion universal grief.

I have just been told from good authority, that the courtiers, thinking to make their court to perfection, told the King, that whole squadrons, and even battalions, at a time, were every moment coming into Thionville and Metz, and that our loss had in fact been little or nothing. His Majesty, like a man of honour, was disgusted with such barefaced flattery, and said to them, "Why, here are more troops than I had at first." Maréchal de Gramont, who has a readier turn of wit than any of the rest, answered, "May it please your Majesty, they have had little ones." These are trifles that I take pleasure in hearing and repeating, when they are true.

A courier has arrived who saw Maréchal de Créqui at Tréves. We are still very uneasy about Sanzei; we hear nothing of him but what is disagreeable: some say he is a prisoner, others that he has been killed, and others again, that he is in Tréves with the Maréchal. But there is no dependence on this. The enemies keep Tréves blocked up. The King told M. le Premier, that he was glad to find his son was safe; M. le Premier replied, "I had rather, Sire, he had been taken prisoner, or wounded: I am not pleased with this safety." The King assured him he had done his duty. They begin to talk again of the journey to Fontainebleau. I have not yet forgiven that charming place, for separating us [1]; I cannot think of that moment without emotion and grief: I must absolutely go there again to meet you, or I shall never be reconciled to it.

Madame de Toscane is wholly absorbed in grief in her prison of Montmartre. She has made known to all the ladies, that after their first visit, she wishes to receive no more, and gave the information first to Madame de Rarai. This is thought unnecessarily severe; it is true, she very much resembles the Diana of Arles; but I think she can never hope to be cheerful again, after the life she leads.

Cardinal de Bouillon has just arrived here, he is greatly affected with your letters, and convinced of the sincerity of your sentiments; he is almost always weeping. I intend to show him a letter from the Chevalier de Grignan, which it is impossible to read without tears. I have had very little company to-day; I find myself very well after my medicine; I was nursed by all my friends: your portrait served to enliven the conversation; it appears every day more excellent. It is perhaps because Mignard has left off painting. Adieu, my dear and ever lovely child; if you should find a thousand faults in this letter, excuse them, for I cannot think of reading it over again.

[1] See Letter 298, of May 27th, 1675, in this volume.

*LETTER 329

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to the Comte* DE BUSSY.

August, 1675.

[She begins by informing him of the letter of the Comte de Gramont, which has already appeared in that of the 31st July [1], and then adds]:—My father was the inventor of this style; he wrote thus to Maréchal de Schomberg (Chief-Controller of the Finances), when he was made Maréchal of France:

"Monseigneur,
"Quality; black-beard; familiarity."
"CHANTAL."

You will understand, that he meant to say he had been made Maréchal of France on account of his quality; of his having a black beard, like Louis XIII. his master: and of his familiarity with him.

Upon the complaint Maréchal d'Albret has made to the King, that the Marquis d'Ambres, in writing to him, did not address him by the title of Monseigneur, His Majesty ordered the Marquis to do it; upon which, he wrote the following letter to the Maréchal:

"Monseigneur,

"Your master and mine has ordered me to use the word Monseigneur to you; I obey the order I have just received with the same readiness with which I shall always obey those that come from the same quarter, persuaded that you know in what degree I am, Monseigneur,

"your very obedient, and very humble servant."

This is Maréchal d'Albret's answer:

"Sir,

"The King, your master and mine, being the most intelligent Prince in the world, ordered you to give me

[1] See Letter 318, of July 31st, 1675, in this volume.

the title of Monseigneur, because it is my due; and I, because I would express myself clearly and unequivocally, assure you, that in future I shall be, according as your conduct merits, Sir, your very obedient, etc."

LETTER 330

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Livry, Wednesday, August 21, 1675.

Indeed, my dear child, you ought to be with me. I came here this morning alone, extremely fatigued, and so tired of Paris, that I could no longer remain there. Our Abbé stays behind on account of some affairs: I have nothing to do till Saturday; I shall be here these three days in peace and quiet: I shall walk much; I believe my health requires it. I shall think often of you, not to say continually. There is no wood, no lawn, which does not bring to my remembrance that we were there together last year. Alas! how sad a difference! It is sweet to me to think of you, but your absence mingles a bitterness with my thoughts, at which my heart sickens. I foresee this will be a gloomy evening for me. I am most pleased with entertaining you in the little alcove you so much frequented; there nothing interrupts me.

I left M. de Coulanges[1] in great anxiety about M. de Sanzei. As for M. de La Trousse, since the days of my darling Romans, I have never met with such a fortunate adventure. Have you never heard of a Prince in battle, fighting to the last extremity, and of another advancing to see who it is that makes such gallant resistance? He sees the inequality of the combat; he is ashamed of it; he calls off his men; he asks pardon of the valiant hero, who is induced, by his generous behaviour, to deliver up his sword to him, which, had it not been for this proceed-

[1] M. de Coulanges was the brother-in-law of M. de Sanzei, and first-cousin of M. de La Trousse.

ing, he would never have yielded; he makes him his prisoner. He then discovers him to have been one of his friends, when they both lived together in the Court of Augustus: he treats him as his brother, and praises his extraordinary valour. But the prisoner is observed to sigh; perhaps he is in love. I suppose he will be permitted to return upon his parole: but I do not see where the Princess is, who expects him; this circumstance only is wanting to complete the history.

Whenever I send you news, depend on it, that I have it from persons of good authority, but they will not be cited for trifles. There are some very knowing ones to whose intelligence I never attend. Do you wish to know what the valets-de-chambre have written on this occasion[1]? You may guess that this comes from a place where they collect ridiculous letters. One makes an inventory of what he has lost, as his trunk, his coat, his hat, or perhaps his bottle. "It was," says he, "a devilish confusion: if I had been General, it would never have happened." Another says, "We were a company of pleasant madmen; we were but seven thousand, and we attacked twenty-six thousand; so you may see how finely we have been drubbed." A third says, "We took to our heels as fast as we could, and were in a terrible fright." You must think, my dear, I have a great deal of leisure to write all these fooleries.

You speak so handsomely of Cardinal de Retz, and of his retreat, that this alone would render you worthy of his friendship, and esteem. Some people say, he ought to come to Saint Denis; but they would be the first to blame him, if he should take their advice. Many are desirous, at any rate, to tarnish the beauty of his action; but I defy the most subtle jealousy to effect this.

What you say of M. de Turenne deserves a place in his panegyric. Cardinal de Bouillon will have the pleasure, or rather the pain, of it; for I am well assured it will make him weep. Since the death of this hero, the hero of

[1] That is, after the unfortunate affair of Maréchal de Créqui at Tréves.

the breviary is retired to Commerci; there was no longer any safety for him at Saint Mihel. The first President of the Court of Aids has an estate in Champagne; his tenant came to him the other day, to demand either to have his rent considerably abated, or to be released from his bargain. He was asked why he wished it, and told that it was not customary. He replied, that, in the time of M. de Turenne, the people might gather in their harvests in safety, and count upon the revenue of their lands in that country; but that, since his death, all the world was quitting it, fearing the enemy would soon enter it. These things, which are simple and natural, are a more splendid encomium on that great man than the most studied harangues of a Fléchier and a Mascaron.

Do not press me so earnestly to come and see you; you distract my thoughts too much from my melancholy duties. If I listened to the suggestions of my heart, I should lay aside all my little affairs, and come away to Grignan. Oh! with what joy should I fix myself there; and follow for the few remaining days of my life the dictates of my fancy and my inclination! What folly it is to incommode ourselves for the formalities of duties and business! Alas! who is there that will thank us for it? But while I am too much of this way of thinking, my actions, to my great regret, are the reverse of this: as for my words, they have already taken wing; and I have withdrawn myself at least from the constraint of approving what I still continue to do.

The friends [1] of the lady-traveller (Madame de Maintenon), perceiving that the curtain begins to be undrawn, affect to laugh, and turn it into ridicule; or else they own that there has been something, but that all is reconciled. I will neither answer for the present, nor the future, in such an uncertain country; but I can assure you of the past. As for the sovereignty, it is as firmly re-established as it has ever been since the days of Pharamond. *Quantova*

[1] These friends are Madame de La Fayette, Madame d'Heudicourt, and Madame de Coulanges.

(Madame de Montespan) plays at cards in her night-gown with the Lady of the Castle (the Queen), who thinks herself too happy in being received, and understands she is to retire upon the least intimation given to the Lady of the bed-chamber (Madame de Richelieu).

Fear nothing from our war of Brittany; there is no further danger: you may safely trust to my cowardice; I believe I shall venture thither under the protection of the great d'Harouïs. My health is perfectly restored: my good friend de Lorme has told me, that I may keep his powder for the winter, and take a tisane for three days, which he thinks a remedy proper for this season. He is of opinion that I have entirely got over this indisposition.

My son is in despair about the affair of his guidonage [1]: do you remember the prudent maxims you laid down for him, by the authority of Don Quixote? He is at present nine hundred leagues from the point he might have arrived at by following your directions. Every vacancy is demanded for brothers who have been wounded, or families that have suffered so much in the service, that I am ashamed to use any means to bar up their way to preferment. We must leave it to Providence to determine the fortune of this poor guidon: I encourage him as much as I can.

I will let you know my address, if I go from hence: alas! you may safely leave this care to me; it is the chief support of my life. Adieu for to-day: I have tired you sufficiently. The bell rings to prayers: you are not unacquainted with my regularity. It is very fine weather: I shall walk a great deal, and think of you with extreme affection.

[1] The office of a Standard-bearer.

LETTER 331

From Madame DE SÉVIGNÉ *to Madame* DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, August 26, 1675.

I returned on Saturday from Livry and went after dinner to Madame de Lavardin's, who has written you a few lines, with an account of what passed. The Court set out this morning for Fontainebleau; the remembrance of that place makes me shudder [1]; yet other people go there for amusement. God grant we do not meet with some fatal blow in the meantime. The siege of Tréves is carried on briskly. If any ball has a commission to kill Maréchal de Créqui, it will have no great difficulty in finding him, for he exposes himself like a madman. The Prince is with the army in Germany. He said to a person who was with him not long since: "I wish I could converse with the shade of M. de Turenne for two hours only, that I might be let into his chain of operations and designs, and make myself as well acquainted with the country, and Montécuculli's manner of acting, as he was." And when the same person told him that he thought His Highness looked very well, and prayed God that he might return safe, for his own sake as well as that of France, the Prince made him no answer, but shrugged up his shoulders.

My son writes me word that the Prince of Orange is making preparation to besiege Quesnoy; if so, they are on the eve of an action. M. de Luxembourg wants to do something to be talked of; he is very happy, for he has conversed with the Prince's shade. In short, we are under apprehensions on all sides. I have asked M. de Louvois for Sanzei's regiment, with leave to dispose of the guidonage, supposing all the while that poor Sanzei is really dead; though we have no news of him yet. The Vicomte de

[1] See Letter 298, of May 27th, 1675, in this volume.

Marsilly is my resident with the Minister, and is to bring me his answer. As for the regiment of Picardy, we must think no more of it; unless we wish to be overwhelmed with debt in two years: *overwhelmed* is wrong, the true word is *dishonoured*; for, since we are no longer permitted to ruin ourselves, nor to borrow, as formerly, there is nothing left for us but downright infamy. Chénoise, the nephew of Saint-Hérem, is risen from the dead within these two days; he was taken prisoner by the Germans, and it is among them we ought to look for M. de Sanzei. Poor little Froulai was obliged to move, and turn, and examine, five hundred dead bodies in a part of the field of battle, to find this poor fellow, who was at length discovered wounded in ten or twelve places: his poor mother begged the place of Grand-Maréchale-des-logis (of the Palace), which she purchased: she laments and weeps; she is told they will think about it, and more than twenty persons are striving for the place. In truth, every day convinces us that nothing could be more complete, nor attended with greater confusion, than the defeat of Maréchal de Créqui. I saw his lady on Saturday at M. de Pomponne's: it is scarcely possible to know her.

Do not imagine, my dear child, that the death of M. de Turenne has been only a nine days' wonder: he is talked of and lamented daily: happy, as you say, are those who have not felt his loss. The defeat which has taken place since his death, has called forth anew the praises of this hero. You gave me great pleasure in saying you shuddered at the speech of St.-Hilaire: he is not dead; he will live with his left arm, and preserve the beauty and magnanimity of his soul. I suppose you were very much surprised to hear of a defeat on our part, no such thing having happened since your birth. The Coadjutor is the only one who has profited by the circumstance, in giving so novel and spirited an air to his harangue, that this part of it has constituted all its value, at least to the courtiers, for all the clever ones praised it from beginning to end. I dined on Saturday with the Coadjutor, and the hand-

some Abbé: I am delighted when I see any of the Grignans.

Search through the Court, my dear child, and through all France, and you will find I am the only one who, having a daughter I so truly love, am deprived of the pleasure of seeing and passing my life with her: these are dispensations of Providence, to which I cannot submit without infinite pain: we do well then to write to one another, since it is all the gratification we have. I can easily conceive how much your time is employed in reading my letters, and how much they take you from your other duties: you lose your senses, you say, and I am told the same thing two or three times in a week. My abominably long letters are enough to do it. They make a volume, and it must be utterly impossible for you to read them through at once, and yet you say you like them. Here is the fat Abbé, who tells me a thousand ridiculous things of my journey into Brittany. He will have it that I have fixed to go only since I heard of the disorders occasioned by the mutineers there, and that I want sadly to be present, because I may not have an opportunity of seeing such a sight again as long as I live.

The Chevalier de Lorraine has returned to Monsieur again, as if nothing had happened: he has met with some charitable person, who has put him into the right or wrong way at last. This has excited but little attention: it is the evil of a day, in comparison with the death of M. de Turenne and the consequences that have followed it.

Our Cardinal is still at St.-Mihel's. I am going to write to him; he will not be displeased with me for doing so. The Abbé de Pontcarré is very deserving of your letters; he likes them, and knows how to read them: he shows them to me, and then hides them as he would old gold. You cannot conceive what an agreeable turn you give, without thinking of it, to every thing you undertake.

Mademoiselle is here for the purpose of bathing; she does not go to Fontainebleau. I most sincerely embrace M. de Grignan and my grand-children; but I am yours,

my dear, above every other consideration: you know how far I am from the dotage which transfers the maternal love to the grand-children: mine remains fixed in the first stage, and I love the little ones only because I love you.

THE END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.